THE **OFFICIAL** DREAMCAST MAGAZINE

Dreamcast

SSUE 01 NOVEMBER 1999 £4.99 www.dreamcastmag.co.uk

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FIRST WITH THE INSIDE SCOOP ON DREAMCAST'S DEVASTATING TOKYO LINE-U

ON THIS MONTH'S CD →

SONIC ADVENTURE

The return of the world's most famous supersonic blue hedgehog. Probably. This one-level demo of *Sonic Adventure* (reviewed last issue, score: 9/10) gives you a taste of the lush scenery from the game's Emerald Coast stage. The aim is to race to the end, collecting as many rings as possible along the way. The usual story, but it's never looked this good before.

Playable demo

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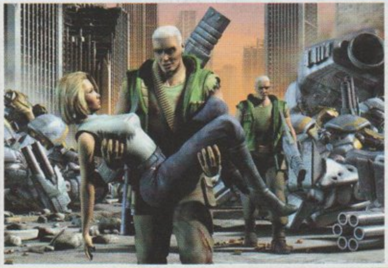
MILLENNIUM SOLDIER: EXPENDABLE

Back in the eighties, commando-style games were all the rage, but they've since gone the way of Sly Stallone's acting career. Until now, that is. *Millennium Soldier* (reviewed last issue, score: 7/10) gives you the chance to play Rambo. In this demo of the first level, gameplay is simple: if it moves, shoot it; if it doesn't, blow it up. And don't forget your bandana.

Playable demo



97280
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CREDITS

97280
TIME
CREDITS

TOY COMMANDER

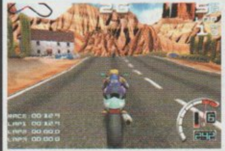
Sega's French developers No Cliché bring you a cross between *Toy Story*, *Small Soldiers* and *Micro Machines*. *Toy Commander* (reviewed on page 78) enables you to take control of more than 30 miniature vehicles in a battle to win back your toy collection from the evil Hugolin Bear. This movie gives a sneak preview of some of the toy vehicles under your control.

Movie

SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

Four wheels good, two wheels better? Maybe. This is the official game of the Suzuki Alstare team, and involves burning round 12 tracks on souped-up superbikes, trying not to end up splattered across the road. The game's biggest asset is its blistering speed – something this movie will give you a good idea of.

Movie



SEE THAT SHINY ROUND DISC STUCK ON THE COVER OF THIS COPY OF *OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE?* LOAD IT INTO YOUR DREAMCAST AND THIS IS WHAT YOU GET…

SPEED DEVILS

Dreamcast may be launching with a number of driving titles, but they've each got their own particular niche. In the case of *Speed Devils* (reviewed on p93), there are themed tracks, short cuts, customisable cars and a cast of unique characters. This movie shows off a few of the game's sharpest cars, and also gives you a flavour of the equally sharp sounds.

Movie

▽

BUGGY HEAT

Buggy Heat is a driving game with a difference. It's as much about skill and balance as it is about sheer speed, which, when combined with mouth-watering visuals that really show off Dreamcast's power, makes for an engrossing experience. The demo shows you exactly what it's like doing a lap of one of the game's easier tracks, so you're prepared for the real thing.

Rolling demo

▽

HYDRO THUNDER

It's already been a hit in the US arcades, and now *Hydro Thunder* (reviewed on p92) is roaring onto Dreamcast for gamers who love their water sports. You get to pilot 13 of the world's fastest speedboats, roaring round circuits trying to beat the competition and avoid a watery grave. This pulsating movie should give you some idea of the game's action.

Movie

▽

$97,904,618.09

THE RECORD-BREAKING CONSOLE IS HERE AT LAST

DREAMCAST HAS HIT THE SHOPS, the hype machine is in full swing, and the console which will forever change the face of gaming is finally here. It's so 'here' that you can actually touch its neat plastic casing and hold those ergonomic control pads. Best of all, you can already get your hands on 18 games, my own personal favourite of which would have to be *Ready 2 Rumble*, surely the funniest beat 'em up ever devised.

As I write this, we don't know how many machines will be sold on launch day in the UK. What we do know is that when the console was launched in America, Sega broke records for the number of machines sold. On September 9, 1999, in a single 24-hour period, takings of almost $98 million (£60m) were achieved. It was phenomenal. Two weeks later I was in New York and it was still impossible to get a Dreamcast anywhere. More than 500,000 lucky Americans have snapped them up and are already sampling the future of gaming. Now it's our turn.

Shops up and down the country have spent months preparing for Dreamcast's launch day. When Sega announced that the console would be delayed by three weeks, it was a crushing blow. But that bitter disappointment has faded now with the realisation that 18 games will be available from day one (loads more than the Americans had access to). Some of them are truly mind-blowing: the awesome *UEFA Striker*, the addictive *House Of The Dead 2*, the intense *Power Stone*, and the inimitable *Ready 2 Rumble*, to name just a few. But if you think these are good, just wait until you catch the likes of *Soul Calibur, D2* and *Metropolis Street Racer* – they are, appropriately enough, the stuff that dreams are made of.

To give you a flavour of what's to come, we've given over much of this issue to the land of the rising sun, the place where games consoles were invented and the country which has spawned some of the finest games in history. The Japanese may well be responsible for some of the strangest role-playing games in existence and some of the weirdest gadgets ever imagined, but as far as games consoles go they are a hotbed of talent and creativity.

As well as exploring the Japanese culture which spawned all this innovation, we've also sent some of the *ODM* staff to look around the Tokyo Game Show and report back on the Dreamcast games in development as we speak: titles like *Shenmue, D2* and *Resident Evil: Code Veronica*, as well as bonkers games like *Seaman* (honest) and *Chu-Chu Rocket* which only the Japanese could come up with. Tokyo is a strange place, full of strange customs and traditions. In this issue we give you the chance to discover why the Japanese are the undisputed leaders of gaming.

Write, however brief, and let me know your thoughts on this issue by emailing me at mhigham@dennis.co.uk, or writing to *ODM*, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. I may not get the time to reply to every letter, but I always read them.

Mark Higham, Editor-in-ChieF

- Soul Calibur *gets a good going over in our next issue, out Thursday 11 November, where we exclusively review the official UK release.*

Globa

Cross-cultura

Psychoti

fight s

Interacting with the big world out there is all part of the fun with the new Dreamcast console
Why? Because it's the first console ever with on-line capabilities, so it can also be used to
e-mail friends and surf the net from the comfort of your armchair. On the other hand, it's also

SEGA

unity.

understanding.

c

enes.

the most powerful console ever, with a whopping great 128-bit processor that can graphically render fights and car chases in crunchingly realistic detail. Dreamcast, the new force in gaming. Schizophrenic? Hell, yes.

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Dreamcast
Up to 6 billion players
www.dreamcast-europe.com

THE OFFICIAL Dreamcast. MAGAZINE

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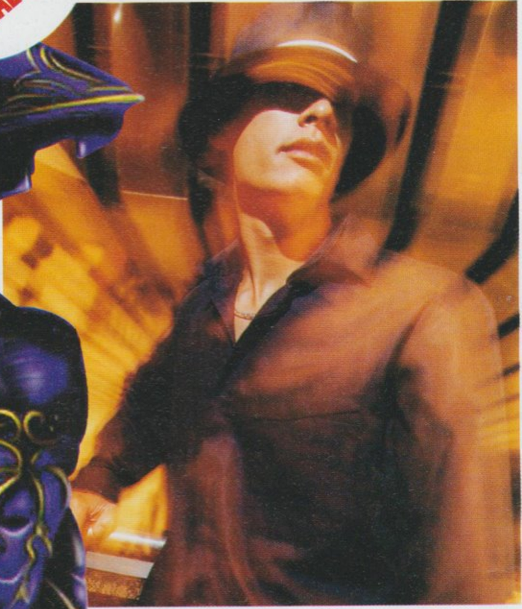
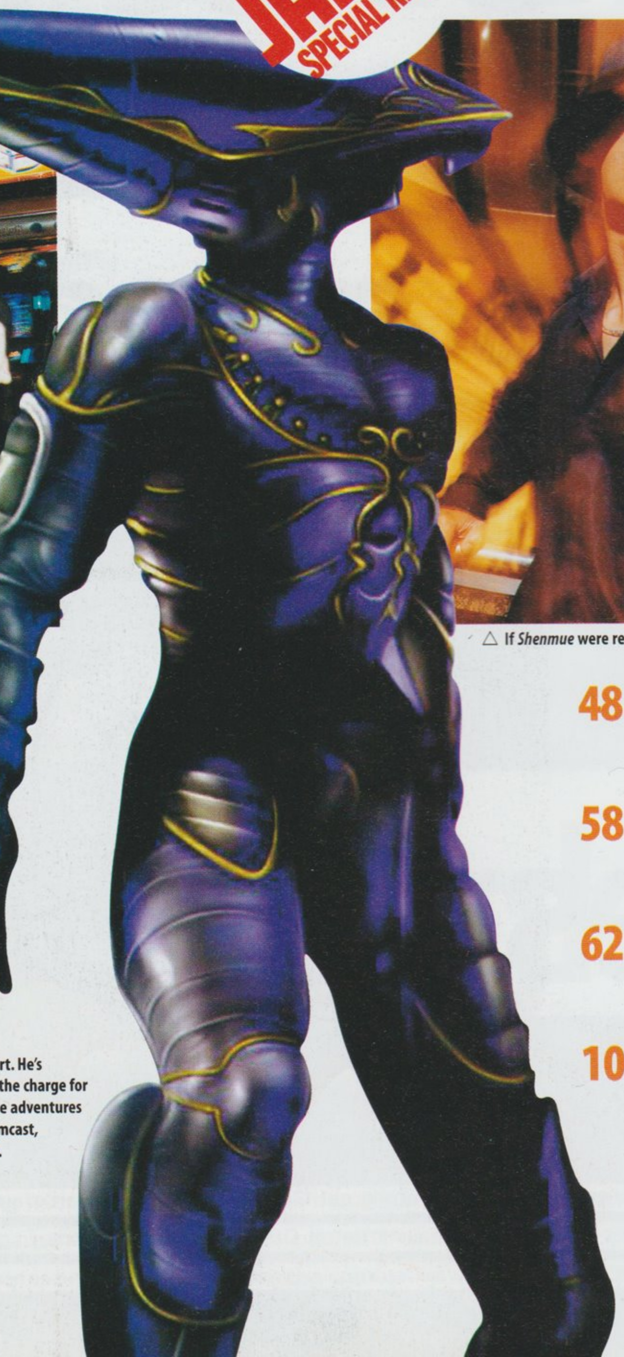


△ If *Shenmue* were real life, this is what it'd look like. Page 104.



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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Sega group

▷ It's a laugh a minute in *Ready 2 Rumble*, see page 66.

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LIVE & DIRECT FROM
JAPAN
SPECIAL REPORT

COME WITH US TO A COUNTRY WHERE 50 MILLION PEOPLE PLAY GAMES, WHERE APARTMENTS COME WITH BOTH POSTAL AND EMAIL ADDRESSES, WHERE PEOPLE SPEND FIVE HOURS A DAY GAMING, AND WHERE BUSINESSMEN PLAY HANDHELDS ON THE WAY TO WORK...

TEXT: ED LOMAS
PHOTOGRAHY: LUMLEY

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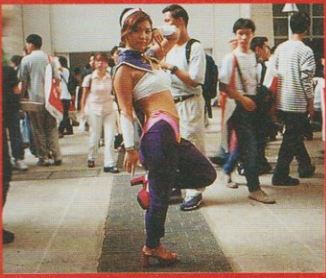
COME WITH US ON A JOURNEY TO THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN. DISCOVER WHAT DREAMCAST MEANS TO THE MAN ON THE STREET AND HOW GAMING FITS INTO THE JAPANESE LIFESTYLE.

THINK YOU'VE GOT IT GOOD? THINK AGAIN...

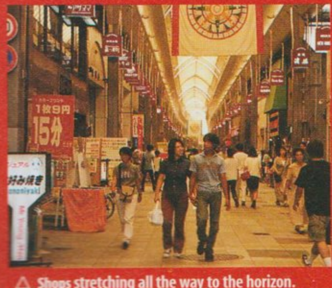
△ At the Tokyo Game Show, prizes are awarded for…


△ …the best home-made character costumes.

△ Check out Joe Higashi, Morrigan and… a train.

BRAVE FIRE FIGHTERS
△ Sega's latest arcade hit, *Brave Firefighters*.

△ The Japanese are very enthusiastic people.


△ Shops stretching all the way to the horizon.

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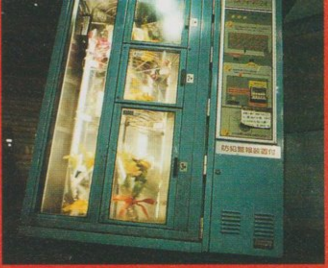
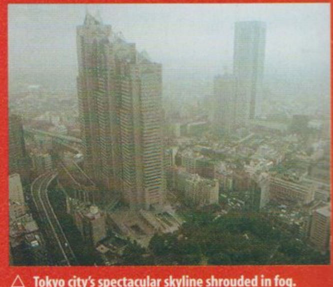

△ Vending machines sell everything: flowers…

△ …porn (Jo Guest even makes one cover)…

TOSHIBA
会
626
△ …and batteries. Is this a great idea, or what?

△ The Government Building, the tallest in Tokyo.

△ Akihabara, also known as Electric Town.


△ Tokyo city's spectacular skyline shrouded in fog.

SHINJUKU

WHERE NIGHTLIFE MEETS BUSINESS

SHINJUKU STATION IS WHAT SEPARATES one of Tokyo's busiest nightspots from its business centre. As such, it's a busy place. A *very* busy place – more than two million people travel through the station every day, most of them going to and from work during the morning and evening rush hours. The trains get so crowded that people are employed at the station simply to push commuters on board. Anyone lucky enough to get a seat falls asleep immediately, while everyone else stands with their face stuck against the window or in somebody's armpit.

This is an area which never stops moving. Hundreds of bars, clubs and restaurants are hidden in rows of tall buildings covered in neon signs, and a lot of them keep going all night. Just as the party people are heading home in the morning, Shinjuku becomes a hard-working business centre for the day, before going crazy again as soon as the sun goes down. It's big with movie-goers, but the Japanese obsession with comics means that all the movie posters are hand-painted renditions of the photographs we're used to over here. Hence the big Hollywood stars end up looking ever so slightly unwell. Shinjuku is one of the best areas to find the latest arcade games too, as companies like Sega and Namco choose to test many of their machines here months before their general release.

There's always a big mix of people in Shinjuku – suits and cool kids visit a lot of the same places, while tourists head for the seedier areas where English-speaking 'catch men' try to lure them into bars with promises of cheap drinks and pretty girls. Nearby strip clubs and porn shops are packed with drunken American businessmen blowing their company expense accounts, while the locals hang out in bars which magically shut whenever Westerners stumble across them.

△ Shinjuku station is one of Japan's biggest. It has its own shopping centre and is on most of Tokyo's underground and overground lines.

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11

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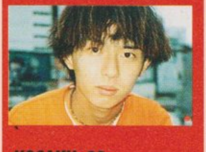
シェンムー

VOX POP

LOCATION **SHINJUKU**

KENICHI, 25
TOUR CONDUCTOR

Do you come through Shinjuku station every day?
Not every day, but a few times a week. It's too busy for me.
Do you know Dreamcast?
Yeah, it's a video game console.
Are you into any games?
Yeah, *Mario Brothers*. I used to play it when I was a kid. I want to get a new machine soon, but I don't know whether to get a PlayStation or Dreamcast.
Where do you work?
In the city. I come to Shinjuku after work because there are lots of fun places to go out.
Where have you been tonight?
Drinking, drinking, drinking. I got pissed. I can't speak well.



KOSAKU, 22
COLLEGE STUDENT

Do you work in Shinjuku?
No, I go to Waseda University near here. I still have to get the train most days, but I try to avoid it during the rush hours.
Where do you go out?
Round here, in Shinjuku. I like sitting around in the street, listening to bands and meeting new people. I make lots of new friends every day.
Do you drink a lot?
No, I don't like drinking much. That's why I don't go out in Shibuya – there are too many alco-people there.
Are you into videogames, like Dreamcast?
I'm only a student, so I can't afford to buy games consoles. DC is too expensive for me.
How much do you think it should cost?
It's about ¥20,000 [£115] now. I'd say ¥10,000 [£58] is fair.
Which games are you into?
Baseball games. I really like the new Sega one in the arcades, with a little bat you move to hit the ball. That's coming out on Dreamcast, isn't it? I'll get that when they drop the price.

JOHN, 26; ERIC, 23
JAPANESE STUDENTS

What are you in Japan for?
We're from the USA, where we're learning Japanese.
Is this the first time you've been to Japan?
Yeah. It's actually the first time I've even been out of America.
You know of Dreamcast?
Eric: I think I heard about it.
John: Yeah, I'd really like one.
What do you know?
John: Dreamcast wasn't out in the States when we left, but it's been advertised and talked about on TV for quite a while. Many of the games look good.
Are you into games at all?
Yes, yes. The *Final Fantasy* series especially.
I guess because you're learning Japanese you can play Japanese RPGs as well, right?
John: Not really. I'm okay at speaking Japanese, but learning to read all the kanji symbols is really tough.

TÔRU, 31
BUSINESSMAN

Do you come through Shinjuku station every day?
Yes, unfortunately. I work just to the west of the station, in one of the big office blocks.
It gets very busy, doesn't it?
Yeah, I often go out for drinks after work so I don't have to travel home during rush hour.
Where've you been tonight?
Drinking. And singing at a karaoke party.
Do you know Dreamcast?
Ah yeah, Sega. I play games.
Which games?
RPGs are great for unwinding – *Final Fantasy V, VI, VII, VIII*, *Dragon's Quest*, that kind of thing. *Die Hard Trilogy* as well.
Are you getting the train home now?
No way, I'm walking! I'm just having a rest before I set off.
You've drunk too much, you mean?
No...

シェンムー

★ VOX POP

★ LOCATION AKIHABARA

KOJI, 29 MANAGER OF TSUKUMO SOFT, AKIHABARA

What's the best-selling Dreamcast game at the moment?
Seaman. Have you heard of it?
Yeah, a lot of people seem to be really into that one. What's so great about it?
You can talk to him and he talks back to you. It's kind of crazy, but a lot of fun.
Which games are your customers most looking forward to?
Seaman again – we keep having to order more copies in. Also *Shenmue* and this Mah Jong game where you play against loads of schoolgirls. You get one of six free picture phonecards with it, so the otaku (super-hardcore gamers) are all particularly looking forward to its release.
Do you open in the middle of the night when a big game's released?
No, we don't, but people sleep outside the store so that they can be first to buy it when we open in the morning.
How is Dreamcast doing overall, compared to PlayStation and Nintendo 64?
I'd say it's about 70 per cent PlayStation, 30 per cent Dreamcast.
What about Nintendo 64?
Oh, about 10%. If there's a big Nintendo 64 game it'll sell really well, but most titles are very small.
What's the best-selling game ever on Dreamcast in Japan?
Sonic Adventure is the best-selling game, with *Soul Calibur* in second place. *Sega Rally 2* wasn't very popular in Japan.
Are people in Japan interested in the Internet features of Dreamcast?
They're interested, but the phone charges are so expensive that not many people use it for the Internet.

TOTU, 21; KENTA, 19; KOUTA, 19 STUDENTS AND SKATEBOARDERS

Do you skate here a lot?
Sometimes, but not that often.
Do you just skate in Akihabara, or do you come for the electrical shops?
Totu: I just hang out here to skate. I'm not really into computers and things.
Kouta: I come here for the games as well.
Is there anything you're interested in for Dreamcast?
Totu: *Marvel vs Capcom* – the *X-Men* comics are cool.
Kouta: *Virtua Fighter 3tb* – I'm the best at that in the arcades.
Kenta: This! [pointing to picture of *Dead Or Alive 2* girls in bikinis].
What do you think of Dreamcast?
Totu: It's too expensive. It costs about ¥20,000, which is the same as a complete board – deck, trucks, wheels, everything.
Kouta: Can you get me a free one?

YUKI, 18 STUDENT, HANGING OUT IN SEGA HI-TECH LAND, AKIHABARA

How often do you come to Sega Hi-Tech Land arcade?
I come here three or four times a week, for roughly two hours.
And what do you play?
Virtua Striker 2000. And there's a Mah Jong game I'm really good at too.
What's your best game ever?
Maybe *Virtua Striker 2000*. I like sports games – basketball and baseball games especially.
What do you think of Dreamcast?
It's not bad, but there aren't that many games on it I want.
When *Virtua Striker 2000* comes out will you get one?
It's coming out? Oh yeah! Definitely.

sato musen
新作・人気ゲーム
トルネコの大冒険2

△ **Browsing hard in Akihabara reveals gadgets we didn't even know had been invented yet. The coolest thing at the moment is a mobile phone which opens into a palm-sized PC with a full 'QWERTY' keyboard and touch-sensitive screen.**

ソフト体験コーナー
安さ爆発
ポップ ミュージック 2
Doccimo
ISHIMA

△ Akihabara's big stores get sent Dreamcast games weeks before they're officially released, and have them running on demo units in the street. Hordes of gamers queue patiently for their chance to try them out.

AKIHABARA

WHERE GADGETS ARE A BOY'S BEST FRIEND

WHILE IT'S ONLY A VERY SMALL PART OF TOKYO, Akihabara is one of the most exciting areas in the whole city. Known as Electric Town, it contains nothing but shops selling the very latest gadgetry to hit a country famous for its obsession with technology. Cameras, TVs, DVD players, watches, mobile phones, computers, hi-fi systems… the smallest, most advanced of each are on sale here at cut-prices. Because so many places are selling the same things there are big price wars, meaning you can pick up stuff two years before it comes out in England for up to 30 per cent less than it will eventually cost.

Naturally, Akihabara is popular with videogames players. There are tons of games shops for them to choose from, ranging from tiny specialist places to massive gaming department stores with a floor dedicated to each format – some even have their own arcades in them. These places attract hardcore gaming 'otaku' from all over the world, who come to search for rare editions of games and exclusive pieces of related merchandise, as well as bargains – such as Sonic Team's Saturn masterpiece *NiGHTS*, for only £4.

The streets of Akihabara have a unique look, with so much packed into such small spaces that the retinas of your eyes feel as though they could overload at any time. The shops don't stop at the edge of the pavement; they spill out onto tables in the street, with racks of gadgets covered in luminous cardboard stars advertising all the latest deals. Even if you're not into technical bits and pieces, Akihabara will make you obsessed with the most up-to-date, most compact pieces of kit in a matter of hours. If you're already that way inclined, you can join the visiting Westerners who stagger about, open-mouthed, with a look on their face as though they've just found their way into the Garden of Eden.

A word of warning, however: make sure you eat before heading off to Akihabara. With hardly any restaurants to speak of, you could easily starve to death in one of the labyrinthine games stores without even realising that you're hungry.

シェンムー

★ **VOX POP**

★ LOCATION **KYOTO**

SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, 44, NINTENDO GENIUS MASTERMIND

Where are you headed?
To Nintendo's offices in central Kyoto.
Have you heard of Dreamcast by any chance?
Yes, of course.
And what do you think of it?
I think it's a very good machine in terms of development for PC developers, because they are sharing the same kind of programming schemes. Of course, Nintendo's Dolphin and Sony's PlayStation 2 are not there yet, so until then, yes, it's the machine with the highest performance.
What's your favourite Dreamcast game?
The only one I'm aware of is a game called *Seaman*, which has been made by Mr Saito, and for some reason I have been involved in a kind of supporting work for it. I haven't played anything else.
Will Dolphin be better than Dreamcast, then?
I'm in the position where I have to say yes, but of course the later any dedicated console appears, the better the performance should be.

FUKUNAGA, 23 & NAGANO, 23 STUDENTS

Do you know of Dreamcast?
Fukunaga: Yes, but I don't have one of my own.
Have you ever played one?
Fukunaga: No, never.
Are there any Dreamcast games you've seen that you want to play?
Fukunaga: Yeah, all my friends say *Seaman* is really good.
Do you own any consoles?
Fukunaha: Yes, a PlayStation and a Super Nintendo.
What kind of games do you normally play?
Fukunaga: Sports games – snowboarding ones, mostly.

YOSHIDA, 24; YASUDA, 26 SECRETARIES

Do you know Dreamcast?
Both, giggling a lot: Yes.
Have you ever played on one?
Both, still giggling: We can't play games.

HIGASHINO, 19; ISHII, 19 BEAUTICIANS

Have you played on a Dreamcast?
Higashino: Yes, I really like all the fighting games on it. And *Seaman*.
Ishii: Yeah, *Seaman*!
What's your favourite game?
Both: The arcade game *Dancing Stage*.
Are you any good at it?
Higashino: Oh yeah!
Ishii: No he isn't!

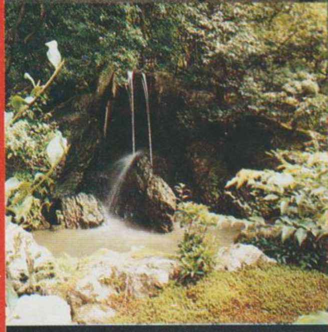
KITA, 24 ARTIST

Have you played on a Dreamcast?
Uh-huh.
And what did you think?
I love *Sonic*, but I really want one of Namco's racing games to come out. *Sega Rally 2* is good.
Which games on other systems are you into?
Resident Evil, *Parappa The Rapper*, loads of stuff!
Do you own a Dreamcast?
No, but my friend has one and I play on it a lot.
Which Dreamcast game are you looking forward to?
Resident Evil: Code Veronica! And I might buy one of my own so I can play some of the big RPGs that are coming out soon, like *Shenmue* and *Climax Landers*.

KYOTO

WHERE JAPANESE CULTURE MEETS THE MODERN WORLD

KYOTO IS THE ANCIENT CAPITAL of Japan, a city where the past and present meet in a strange mix of cultures. Surrounded by spectacular mountains, its skyline is dotted with both shiny office towers and the pointed roofs of more than 1,600 Buddhist temples and 270 Shinto shrines. This mix of old and new Japan is illustrated perfectly at the beautiful Kinkaku-Ji



△ Two and a quarter hours from Tokyo on a Bullet Train and you reach Kyoto, almost the exact opposite of the current capital city. There are many beautiful places here in which to get away from the stresses of modern Japanese life.

Golden Temple, where visitors can light an incense stick, ring a sacred bell, say a peaceful prayer… then grab a Coke from the vending machine right next to the shrine itself.

While Kyoto is a city which is dominated by its history, it's still got one of the coolest youth cultures outside Tokyo. Its massive shopping parades are packed with fashionable clothes stores where the funkiest T-shirts can cost up to £100, and classic trainers sell for four times as much as they did when they came out ten years ago. In the shop just next door you can find an old man making Samurai swords exactly as they've been made in Kyoto for 1,200 years.

A train station may not sound like the best place to hang out, but Kyoto's is a spectacular building. As well as being a busy train and bus terminal, it houses hotels, bars, restaurants, a shopping centre and even a big Sega Joypolis arcade in its 20-odd floors of entertainment. The groups of cool youngsters hanging out in this castle of modern architecture give it a very different feel from the outskirts of the city only a mile or two away. Out there you rarely see a building more than two stories high, or anyone under the age of 40. And as you get closer to the surrounding mountains, rickshaws become gradually more popular than taxi cabs, and the flashy English phrases and Western brand names eventually disappear completely.

シェンムー

VOX POP

LOCATION **SHIBUYA**

JOICHI, 24;
KINTARO, 24
STUDENTS

What are you doing here in Shibuya tonight?
Kintaro: Drinking. With my girlfriend.
Do you play videogames?
Kintaro: Yeah.
Do you know Dreamcast?
Kintaro: Yeah. Dreamcast. Yeah, I know it.
Have you got a Dreamcast?
Kintaro: Yeah.
Joichi: Dreamcast! Ha ha ha ha ha!
What's your favourite Dreamcast game?
Kintaro: Mah Jong!
Joichi: Ha ha ha ha ha ha!
You're lying.
Kintaro: Soccer games.
Which ones?
Kintaro: *World Cup.*
Joichi: Ha ha ha ha ha ha!
How much have you guys drunk?
Kintaro: A little... I like *World Cup. World Cup '99.*

KIYO, 25 AND
CHIZUKO, 21
ART STUDENTS

What have you been doing this evening?
Kiyo: We're just sitting here talking and blowing bubbles!
And listening to the band?
Do you like them?
Kiyo: Um… they're okay.
Chizuko: I like them. The girl's got a very pretty voice.
Do you know who they are?
Both: No idea.
Do you know Dreamcast?
Chizuko: Dreamcast!
Kiyo: Yeah, Dreamcast!
Do you think it's any good?
Chizuko: I've never played on it.
Kiyo: No, neither have I.
Oh. Do you like any other videogames?
Kiyo: *Parappa The Rapper* and, *Um Jammer Lammy!*
Chizuko: I've only got an old Nintendo Entertainment System, but I don't bother playing on it any more.
Kiyo: I like PlayStation!

KOICH, 23

Do you like Dreamcast?
Joichi: Dreamcaaaaast!
Koich: Oh, yeah! Mmm.
Which games?
Joichi, again: *Seaman*! *Seaman*! Ha ha ha ha ha!
Koich: Shut up. I like *Sonic*.
Kintaro: Beckham! Do you know Beckham?
That's not a game, it's a footballer.
Kintaro: Do you know Shearer?
Koich: My grandfather is in England.
Kintaro: Ince? Do you know Ince?
Joichi: England! Ha ha ha ha!
Kintaro: England are the best!
That's very kind of you. Bye.

DO AS INFINITY
DAI, 28 (acoustic guitar);
VAN, 20 (vocals);
KYO, 28 (electric guitar);
NORIYUKI, 27 (manager)

Who are your favourite bands?
Kyo: Radiohead and Hendrix.
Dai: Aerosmith, Led Zeppelin, and Natalie Imbruglia.
Van: Oooh, me too, me too! Natalie Im...bloolia! He-he-heh!
How often do you play in the street here in Shibuya?
Noriyuki: Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
You had a lot of people watching tonight. How many do you normally get?
Noriyuki: At times we've had up to 250 people. That's why we have this big sound system.
How long have you been together in a band?
Noriyuki: We've been playing in Shibuya for three weeks now, but we played in other parts of Tokyo for a while before that.
Do you all know Dreamcast?
Kyo: Videogames!
Van: Sega!
Dai: Yeah, you can use the Internet with it.
Noriyuki: We'll be playing in London soon. Look out for us! Here, have a MiniDisc of our band!

SHIBUYA

WHERE THE YOUNG GO MAD

SHIBUYA IS ONE OF Tokyo's best areas for an evening's entertainment. Many of the city's coolest young residents get dressed up in the latest fashions and head here to let their hair down at night. Like London's Soho, bars and fast food joints line the streets, though – as with all of Tokyo – everything is coated in blinding banks of flashing neon.

With so much choice available to the punter, each venue works hard to lure people in with waves of tiny light bulbs, giant pulsating signs and loud music pouring from tinny speakers. But we're not talking the kind of cool music you might expect to attract people; we're talking annoying, grating crap, such as a bizarre Japanese version of Ricky Martin's *Livin' La Vida Loca* sung by a guy who sounds like Iron Maiden frontman Bruce Dickinson. Maybe it's some kind of clever negative marketing trick which we haven't yet cottoned on to in the West. Tuxedo-wearing 'catch men' clap and shout at passers-by in an attempt to snare them before they reach a rival bar, but normally come across as terrifying gangsters, frightening off more potential customers than they attract.

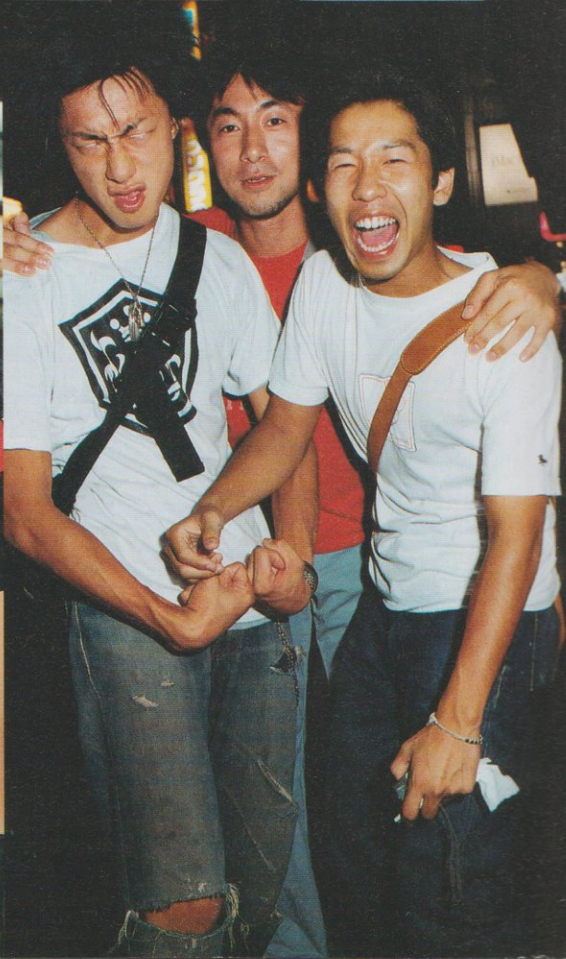
While the Japanese may appear shy and polite by day, they can certainly party with the best of them at night. Most bars stay open until 4am, but there's still a big rush for the last trains out of town at around midnight. Groups of heavily made-up girls hang around looking for taxi cabs, pretending to make important calls on their mobile phones, while spectacularly drunk businessmen stagger all over the place, desperately trying to end their night with a bit of a grope.

Surprisingly, there's little or no trouble with drunkenness in Tokyo – instead of getting aggressive and looking for fights when they have a head full of alcohol, the Japanese simply wobble and smile before falling over and puking. This happy vibe means that people stay out late, listening to bands playing in the street, chatting with new friends, or laughing maniacally at those more drunk than themselves.

After the last trains of the evening have departed, you're guaranteed to find a large number of suited businessmen lying face down in puddles of vomit, only a matter of hours after finishing their high-powered financial meetings. But at least you can guarantee they had a lot of fun getting there.

BLACKY
Billabong

マイアミ
AMUSEMENT SPACE



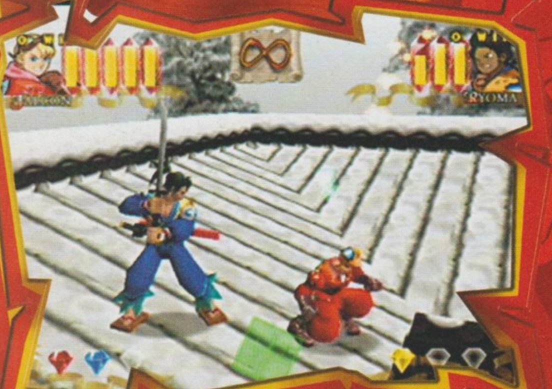
POWER STONE™

Dreamcast.
POWER STONE
CAPCOM
EIDOS

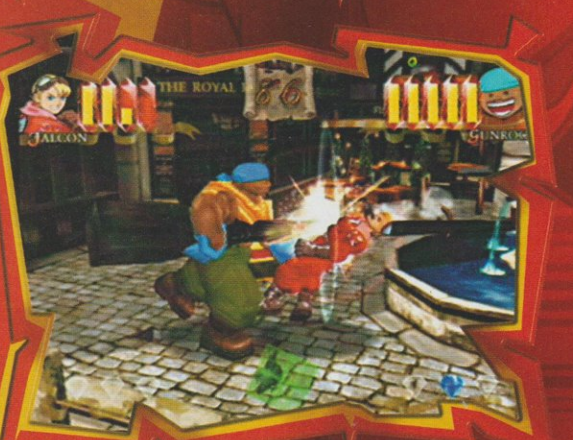
An all-out action game where anything goes. Power up for the first true 3D-action fun!

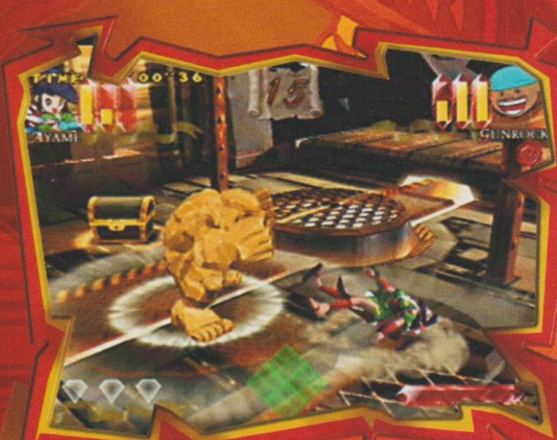
"Massively addictive, cleverly realised and simply beautiful to look at, Capcom's Power Stone i truly a jewel in the Dreamcast's crown" Edge 9/10*

"Power Stone is probably the closest any game on a home system has come to the coin-op quality that video games has always strived for" Arcade 6/6*


FALCON
RYOMA

- Jaw-dropping graphics with fast-paced gameplay!
- Loads of special interactive moves - climb a pillar, lift a chair or even run up a wall.
- Find the fantastic weapon power-ups...a bazooka, a Molotov cocktail, a flamethrower plus more!
- Collect the power stones to increase your fighting power.


THE ROYAL
86
FALCON
GUNROCK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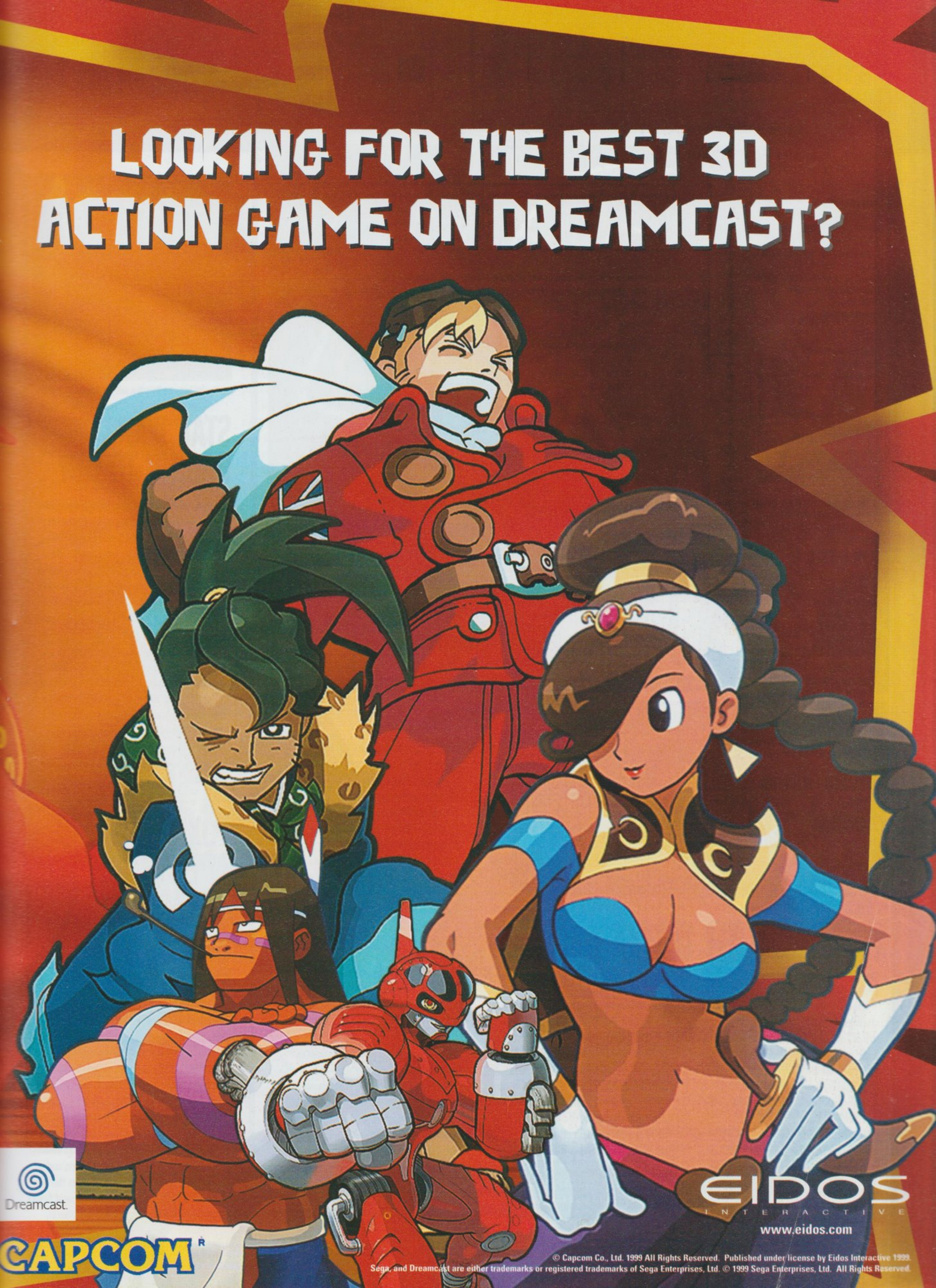
AYAME
GUNROCK

* Import/NTSC version reviewed


LOOKING FOR THE BEST 3D ACTION GAME ON DREAMCAST?
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IT'S OUT THERE

Dreamcast US launch goes into orbit. Now it's Europe's turn…

DREAMCAST FINALLY HIT the stores on October 14 with Sega Europe confident of emulating the phenomenal success of the American launch where sales have far surpassed the company's original projections.

Several UK high street stores were due to open at the stroke midnight to cater for eager gamers who couldn't wait for normal opening hours to pick up their Dreamcasts. Among them were the Oxford Street Virgin Megastore and more than 100 branches of Electronics Boutique with events called, appropriately enough, Dreamcast@Midnight.

"Electronics Boutique has been championing Dreamcast right through the summer and the result has overwhelmed us," said Steve Wilson, EB's console buying director. "We anticipated a significant interest, but nothing on the scale to which we're now looking at."

Dreamcast went on sale via a staggering 15,000 American stores across the pond on September 9 (9.9.99). Pre-orders had already risen above 300,000 – more than three times the previous benchmark for consoles, set by Sony's PlayStation in 1995 – with Sega expecting to rake in around $45million (£27m) from sales during the first 24 hours. In fact they managed a whopping $97,904,618 (£59m) – a new record for single-day retail sales in the United States. By comparison, *Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace*, took just $28million on its first day in cinemas in May.

More than 400 outlets across the US opened their doors at 12.01am, with die-hards reported to have camped outside some stores for up to two days. Many of those who hadn't pre-ordered a machine found themselves out of luck, with several retailers running out of stock on the first day.

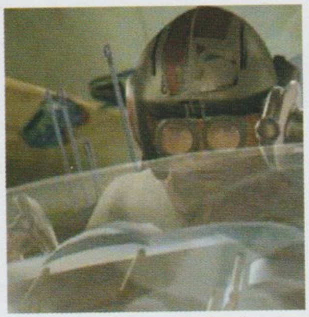
"The consumer enthusiasm for this product is unbelievable," said a spokesman for one chain, KB Toys. "In all my years in the industry I have never seen the frenzy I saw this morning for a consumer electronics product the way I have seen it for Sega's Dreamcast."

Sega of America originally expected to sell a million consoles in the US before the end of the year and 1.5 million by March but, after an astonishing first few weeks they're now busy bashing their calculators to come up with new estimates.

"Our wildest expectations have been exceeded," said Chris Gilbert, senior vice-president of sales at Sega of America, "and we believe this is only the very beginning of a phenomenally successful run for Sega Dreamcast."

Did you go out to a midnight launch to buy your Dreamcast? If so we want to hear all about it. Email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk with the subject header 'Midnight Dreamer', or write to us at Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

STOP PRESS: 514,000 Dreamcasts have been sold in the US in two weeks. By comparison, it took four months for PlayStation to reach half a million sales in 1995, and two months for Nintendo 64 to hit that figure in 1996.



△ On its way to Dreamcast via Naomi.

STAR WARS RACING TO DC?

LucasArts announced at the Tokyo Game Show that they are to publish games for Dreamcast next year, with *Star Wars: Episode One Racer* favourite to be the first.

The game, which is currently in development on Sega's Naomi arcade board is based around the pod racing sequence of the movie *The Phantom Menace*. From what we've seen so far, it's looking absolutely stunning.

A Dreamcast version would be expected to have several enhanced features over the PC and Nintendo 64 editions released to much acclaim earlier this year, including enhanced graphics and advanced multiplayer options.

Launch details have yet to be disclosed, but a post-Easter release seems likely. Rest assured we'll be keeping our eyes on this one.

FOX GO APE FOR DREAMCAST

Fox Interactive are to release three Dreamcast titles next year including the first ever videogame version of the classic Charlton Heston film *Planet Of The Apes*.

The 3D action-adventure will place you in the role of Ulysses, a human who must escape from capture, join the human resistance and unravel the mysteries of the strange futuristic world by solving a series of involving puzzles.

Also due is the cutesy 3D platformer *Croc 2* and *Deadly Pursuit*, a city-based car chase game in which you play a US cop. The company hopes to include a voice-activation feature in the latter, enabling you to call police back-up (and donuts, presumably), request helicopter reports and so on, using verbal commands. If it makes the final version, the feature will require the use of Sega's upcoming headset/microphone peripheral.

SEGA GOES RENTAL

Blockbuster lends out Dreamcasts for a tenner

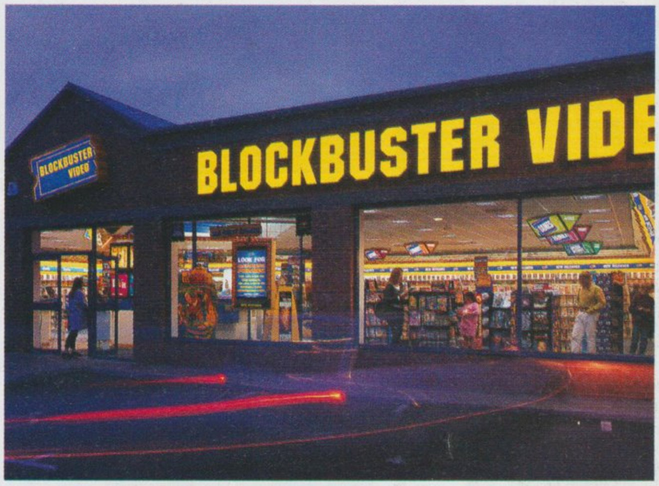
MAYBE YOU DON'T NEED convincing that a Dreamcast and a selection of the finest games on the planet is exactly the thing to have as the nights start drawing in this winter, but you may know someone who does.

In which case send 'em down to their local Blockbuster store, as the video giant has just started a Dreamcast rental scheme so that the unconverted can try before they buy.

Visitors to any of the 200 stores nationwide can borrow a console for two nights for £10, with a choice of games available for rent for £3.50. All the stores also have Dreamcast hardware and software for sale.

"The buzz surrounding Dreamcast is huge, and we already know from our pre-orders that it's going to take the market by storm," Blockbuster's general manager Gerry Berkley told industry paper *CTW*.

Watch out too for DC coverage on Blockbuster's in-store TV channel, Channel B, and their in-house magazine *The Scene*.

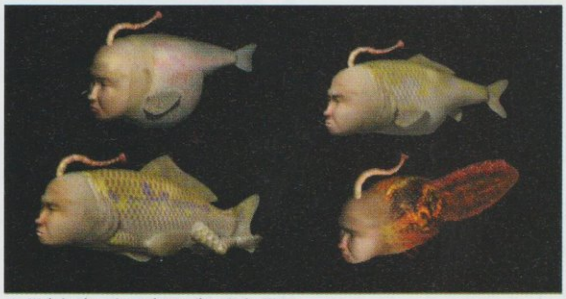


△ **Pop down to Blockbuster and pick up a Dreamcast. Just don't forget the popcorn.**

TOKYO A-GO-GO

More than 160,000 visitors packed into the Makuhari Messe convention centre over the course of three days in September for the Tokyo Game Show. Held twice a year, it is, quite simply, the biggest videogames exposition on the planet.

As you'd expect, *Official Dreamcast Magazine* was there to bring you all the details. Check out our extensive Tokyo games news and previews coverage starting on page 46.



△ **Weirdo virtual pet sim coming to the West.**

GET A LOAD OF SEAMAN

It was a runaway success in Japan, and now Sega have confirmed that *Seaman*, one of DC's most original titles, will be translated into English

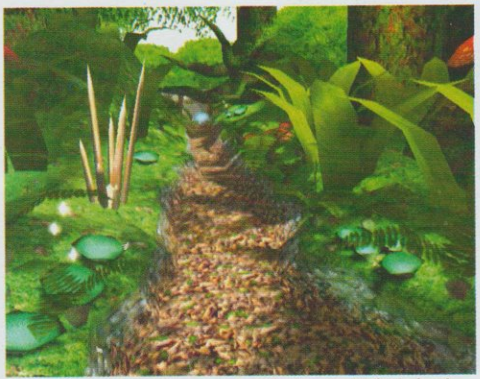
It's a virtual pet simulator with a difference. Supplied with a microphone which plugs into the Dreamcast controller, *Seaman* enables you to talk to your little creations and teach your pet new things. Adjust its environment and it evolves to create a new species.

The pets, which look like something from a *Monty Python* sketch, with human faces grafted onto fish, caterpillars and frogs, among other things, can recognise and respond to an astonishing half a million phrases.

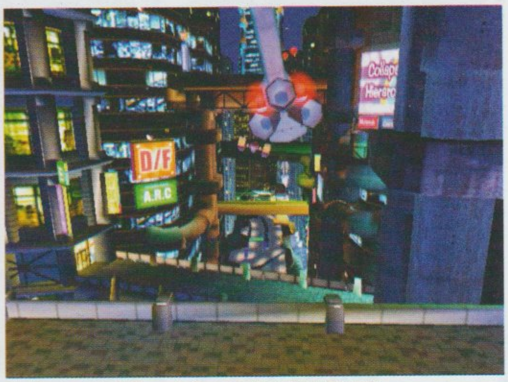
***Seaman* has been riding high in the Japanese sales chart since its release in July, with stores struggling to keep up with demand (see pages 12-19).**

So far only a US release is definite, but that almost certainly means a UK version won't be far behind. Due to the amount of language translation and the complexity of the game, specific European versions are looking very unlikely.

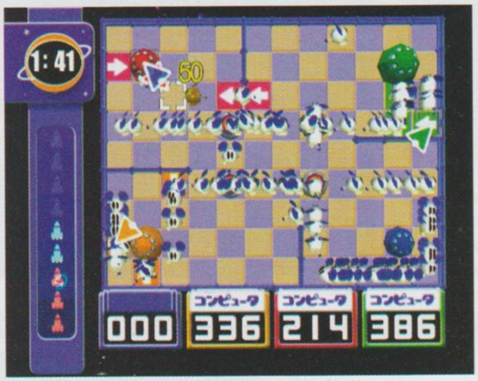
Sega of America have confirmed that the game's title won't be changed for the US release.



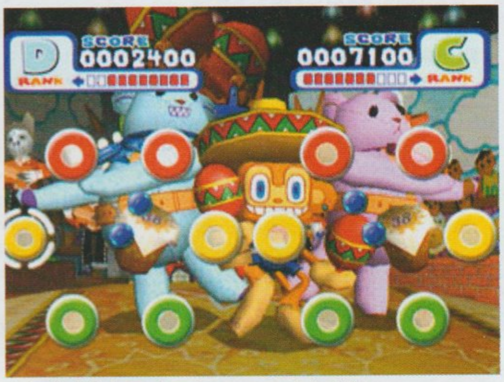
△ *Phantasy Star Online*: get a posse together for a rumble in the jungle.



△ *Phantasy Star Online*: or is it a scene from *Blade Runner*?



△ *Chu-Chu Rocket*: plays a lot, lot better than it looks. Honest.



△ *Samba de Amigo*: mad monkey maracas malarkey! Yes!

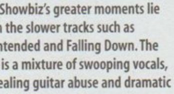
HEAR THIS!
TOP CHOONS

FREQ.NASTY
FREQ'S GEEKS & MUTILATIONS
BOTCHIT & SCARPER

Electro, p'funk, hip-hop, sci-fi vocal samples… there's a bit of everything in this nu-school mash-up, including (a sample of) the kitchen sink. Probably. Nothing quite matches the phenomenal single Boomin' Back Atcha (recently re-released with added vocals from Phoebe One), but a few tracks run close, and the laid back cover of Kiss's I Was Made For Loving You (no, really) is sure to raise a smile. A mixed bag overall, but one that never fails to entertain. *WC*

MUSE
SHOWBIZ
MUSHROOM

The band that they're labelling 'Baby Radiohead' but, hey, what do 'they' know? Muse are actually closer to Jeff Buckley, alternating between sledgehammer angst-rawk and delicately crooned ballads. Matt Bellamy's startling voice suits both, but Showbiz's greater moments lie with the slower tracks such as Unintended and Falling Down. The rest is a mixture of swooping vocals, squealing guitar abuse and dramatic piano hammering. Okay, so it's not a party album, but being miserable has never sounded this fun. *SD*



KOJAK
CRIME IN THE CITY
PRO-ZAK TRAX

Staying true to a commitment to making you want to get on the floor and shake some, Crime In The City is an impressive house-fuelled debut from a French trio who have been tearing it up on the live circuit over the summer. Comprising a technohead, a funk band member and a hip-hop DJ, the mess that could've resulted in three such varied musical backgrounds colliding has instead combined into a funky concoction par excellence. *DT*

CONFIRMED: VALVE'S HALF-LIFE IS COMING

Yes! The "greatest PC game ever" is coming to Dreamcast… but don't start queuing outside stores just yet

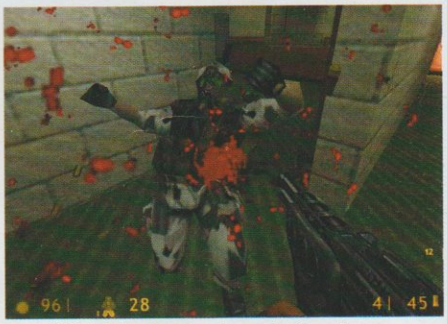
FOLLOWING MONTHS OF speculation, Sega have finally confirmed that the hugely popular first-person perspective shooter *Half-Life* is coming to Dreamcast. The bad news? It's a long, long way off.

Released on PC last year, *Half-Life* – a *Quake*-style 3D shoot 'em up – gained plaudits for its strong, involving narrative, innovative puzzles and excellent enemy artificial intelligence. In fact it was named Game Of The Year by more than 40 publications around the world.

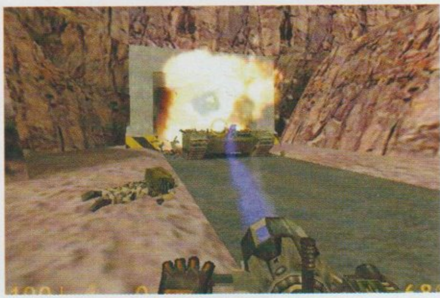
You take the role of unlikely hero Gordon Freeman, a geeky 27-year-old research associate working in a secret underground lab somewhere in New Mexico. When an experiment with radioactive material goes disastrously wrong, wiping out much of the facility and many of your colleagues, belligerent alien creatures descend through a dimension tear (no, it's not a true story), and government troops are sent in to cover up.

Can you survive long enough to get the hell out? Possibly. Can you survive the wait for the game to come out? Possibly not. Sadly, reports suggest that we won't be seeing it on DC until late next year.

The good news is that it looks set to have the full online multiplayer facilities of the PC original. It's also expected to include *Team Fortress* (released as a free add-on for the PC edition), which adds various extras including character classes, new weapons and additional game modes. More news as we get it.



△ *Half-Life* isn't just about shooting people. No, really.



△ See? You get to blast at tanks and stuff too.

SONIC TEAM'S ONLINE PHANTASY

Sonic creators unveil four new titles including a multiplayer RPG on Dreamcast

Sega's highly regarded internal development setup Sonic Team – the unit behind the classic *Sonic* series on MegaDrive, *NiGHTS* and *Burning Rangers* (Saturn) and *Sonic Adventure* (Dreamcast) – have announced details of four new games.

The projects, which were announced to the world one by one during each week of September, are: *Phantasy Star Online* (Dreamcast), *Chu-Chu Rocket* (Dreamcast/arcade), *Samba de Amigo* (arcade) and *Sonic Adventure: International* (Dreamcast).

While no release date has been confirmed, *Phantasy Star Online* is the game which has created the biggest buzz. Backed with the slogan "You're not the only hero", it's an ambitious online role-playing game continuing the series which began back in 1988 on the Sega Master System.

Primarily designed as an online game, with players expected to co-operate to complete quests, Sonic Team are also promising a single-player offline mode with sophisticated artificial intelligence. *Phantasy Star Online* is not expected to arrive in the UK until late 2000 at the very earliest.

The second title, *Samba de Amigo*, is a music-based arcade game that can safely be described as barmy. The two-player game features two pairs of maracas, which you have to shake in time to the music at various different heights. Your actions are mimicked on-screen by a monkey in a sombrero. A Dreamcast conversion at some point is likely but has not been confirmed.

Chu-Chu Rocket is another quirky title, playing like a cross between *Lemmings* and *Bomberman*. Four players can do battle at once with the Dreamcast edition also supporting online play. A Japanese Dreamcast version was up and running at the Tokyo Game Show, but no date has currently been set for a UK release.

The last of the titles announced, *Sonic Adventure: International*, is of more interest to Japanese gamers than to us here in the UK. It's a simple update with new voice-overs and bug fixes, replacing the original Japanese version released last year.

- You can find more details about *Chu-Chu Rocket* on page 56 in our Tokyo Game Show round-up.

GAMES NEWS

KASUMI
60
BASS

DOA2 HITS USA

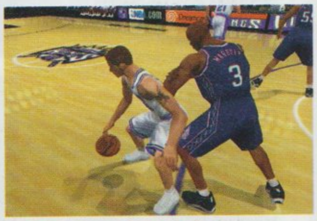
Test versions of *Dead Or Alive 2*, the stunning-looking Naomi-based beat 'em up from Tecmo, have reached arcades in the United States to much acclaim. Meanwhile, our spies in Japan report that an early version of the game is up and running on Dreamcast. It's expected to be released next year.

SEGA GET HEADHUNTED

Early details have reached us on a new game called *Headhunter*, a '1.5-party' title to be published by Sega but created out-of-house by Swedish developers Amuse. Featuring full multiplayer facilities, the game puts you in the role of a bounty hunter. It's scheduled for release at the end of 2000.

STAR TREK NO MORE

Troubled developers Binary Asylum, who had been working on *Star Trek: New Worlds* for Virgin Interactive, have closed down. The long-awaited 3D real-time strategy game was scheduled for release on Dreamcast this Christmas, but is now unlikely ever to make it onto the shelves.



NBA COMING IN 2K

Wondering what's happened to Sega's American sports titles? Well, reports suggest that the awesome-looking basketball sim *NBA 2K*, developed by Visual Concepts, should hit these shores in January. However, no date has been set for the UK release of American football sim *NFL 2K*. Meanwhile, Sega are hoping to release a tennis game next summer to coincide with Wimbledon.

SEGA HAVE MTV LICKED

Sega are sponsoring *The Lick R&B Chart Show* and *The Late Lick*, the MTV shows hosted by Trevor Nelson. The sponsorship deal, which is the biggest in MTV UK history, also covers the station's Lick parties (see page 113 for more info).

GOOD NEWS

An unmoderated newsgroup specifically aimed at UK-based gamers interested in Dreamcast has been set up on Usenet. uk.games.video.dreamcast should be available via your Internet service provider's newsfeeds right now. If it isn't, give 'em a call.

△ *Furballs*: cuddly toys with attitude!

FURRY 'NUFF

Cute and cuddly toys on the rampage in Bizarre Creations' *Furballs*

Acclaim have signed the rights to publish *Furballs*, the up-and-coming third-person perspective cute 'em up from Liverpool-based Bizarre Creations. Combining cuddly characters with unnecessarily large guns, *Furballs* is packed with off-the-wall humour – the head villain is a large white cat who strokes a small bald man. Bizarre promise at least 50 hours of gameplay. Add to that the multiplayer 'fluff match', and all the ingredients are there for a real winner. *Furballs* is due out some time next year. You can follow the development of the title by visiting www.furballs.com/.

A GAME OF TWO HALVES

Sega sponsor five-a-side tourney

While Sega have been busy pumping untold millions into European superclubs Arsenal, Sampdoria and St. Etienne, they have also made sure that their support for the beautiful game extends to grass roots level.

The Dreamcast Millennium Cup is a huge, nationwide five-a-side football tournament open to anyone who could muster nine mates to form a full squad.

Having run since June, the competition is now reaching its closing stages with the final, due to be shown live on Sky TV, scheduled to take place in December.

We were invited to the Powerleague Soccer Centre in Tottenham, north London, to play in the media round of the tournament… and help ourselves to the free bar and barbecue.

Along with teams from *Loaded* and various other lads' mags, we were pitched against celebrity teams featuring, well, loads of people who looked vaguely famous in one way or another. With rousing commentary from Stu 'It's A Knockout!' Hall, the stage was set for a great evening's footie.

While the all-conquering *Official Dreamcast Magazine* team were busy demolishing their opponents with ruthless efficiency (well, until the quarter-final stages, anyway), the rest of us went for a wander to play 'Guess the soap star' and mingle with the celebs.

Highlights included the lookalikes team, whose attention to detail extended as far as 'Beckham' wandering round with a convincingly vacant-looking Posh Spice clone, and Angus Deayton's team scraping a win in thrilling style.

Someone mentioned that a ginger bloke off the telly turned up, but reports that he was dropped from his team after being photographed eating kebabs with Gazza remain unconfirmed.

- Check out the Vox Pops on page 112 for celebrity nonsense.

WATCH THIS!
COOL VHS MOVIES

EXISTENZ

OUT: OCT 18 • CERT:15 • TO RENT

Whizz games designer Allegra Geller (Jennifer Jason Lee) is the creator of eXistenZ, an 'organic' VR game which, when downloaded into humans, taps into their central nervous systems. During a demo, a pro-reality fanatic attempts to assassinate her and she's forced into hiding with a makeshift bodyguard (Jude Law). The couple jack into the game but suddenly find themselves caught up in a bizarre world between fantasy and reality.

David Cronenberg directs this pop at society's obsession with escapism with tongue firmly in cheek. *CE*

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO

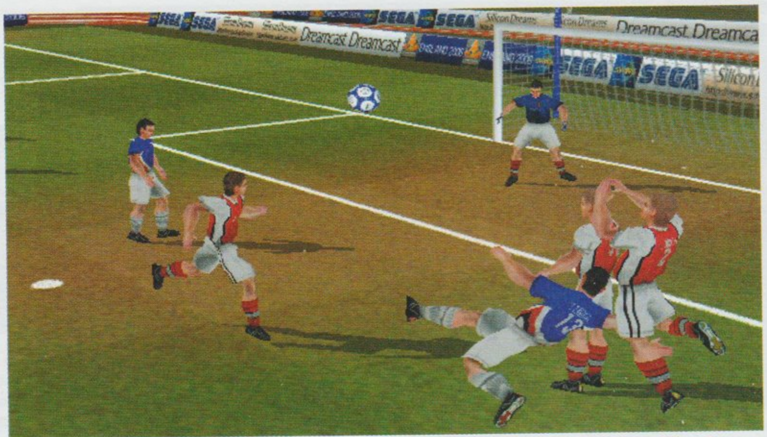
OUT: NOW • CERT: 15 • £9.99

A witty tale of a group of yuppie college grads whose lives revolve around the rapidly fading disco scene of the '80s. Superbitch Charlotte (Kate Beckinsdale) and sweetie Alice (Chloe Sevigny) work in bottom-rung publishing jobs and share a cruddy apartment. They indulge in 'group social life' with Jimmy the wimpy ad exec, Des the cocaine-addicted club boss, and Josh, a crazy DA whose involvement in a drugs investigation ends up changing all their lives. A brilliant script set against a backdrop of boob tubes, big hair and glitter. *CE*

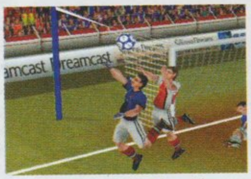
KIDS

OUT: NOW • CERT: 18 • £14.99

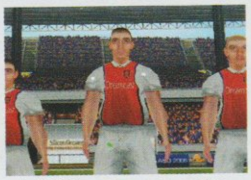
A fly-on-the-wall shocker which focuses on a day in the life of a gaggle of 15-year-olds whose only interests in life are drugs and sex. Telly (Leo Fitzpatrick) is an obnoxious creep who thinks the way to have safe sex is to deflower virgins. But little does he know that he's already contracted HIV, thus ensuring that the first sexual experiences of his conquests are their last. Meanwhile, his ex-girlfriend Jennie (Chloe Sevigny) has just discovered his gift. It's one of the most hard-hitting films of the '90s. *CE*



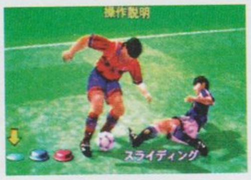
△ ***WorldWide Soccer*: 2,500 polygons per player make this the most detailed footie game, according to Silicon Dreams.**



△ ***WWS*: note 'subtle' advertising.**



△ ***WWS*: hey, his mum loves him.**



△ ***VS2*: arcade action from Sega.**

FOOTBALL FRENZY!

Result! Dreamcast nets a hat-trick of footie games

WHO SAYS YOU NEED SATELLITE OR CABLE TV to enjoy all the football action this winter? A Sega Dreamcast is all you need!

We've already seen Infogrames' *UEFA Striker* (reviewed on page 82), due out later this month. Limbering up and waiting on the sidelines, however, are two more titles – *WorldWide Soccer 2000* and *Virtua Striker 2*.

The former, due in November, is the latest in the highly regarded *WorldWide Soccer* series which started on the Saturn. It's being developed for Sega Sports by the Oxfordshire-based Silicon Dreams, who promise "super-smooth" animation, fluid action and ultra-realistic artificial intelligence.

The game features two levels of player control (basic and advanced) to create a balanced learning curve, with dozens of special moves available to the more experienced player.

Each of the players is comprised of 2,500 polygons which, Silicon Dreams claim, makes *WorldWide Soccer 2000* the most graphically detailed football game around. Commentary, meanwhile, comes from Peter Brackley and James Richardson (who you'll recognise from Channel 4's Italian football coverage), as well as *Match Of The Day*'s Trevor Brooking.

Virtua Striker 2 DC (working title), due out very early next year, is a conversion of the massively popular arcade game from Sega's AM2 division. Expect a faithful copy with simplistic – but hugely enjoyable – gameplay, superb in-your-face graphics, and a commentator who says "marvellous goal" rather a lot. Marvellous indeed.

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
SCRAPE YOUR KNUCKLES. CATCH SOME TAILS.
THE MOVIE
PG

WIN SONIC: THE MOVIE

TEN COPIES UP FOR GRABS COURTESY OF ADV FILMS

You might have missed it at the cinemas (ahem), but everyone's favourite hedgehog (that's Sonic, yeah?) is in his own movie!

Dr Robotnik claims he's been booted out of the city of Robotropolis by the evil Metal Robotnik and, unless Sonic and his pals help out, the whole of Planet Freedom could be blown to smithereens! Cripes!

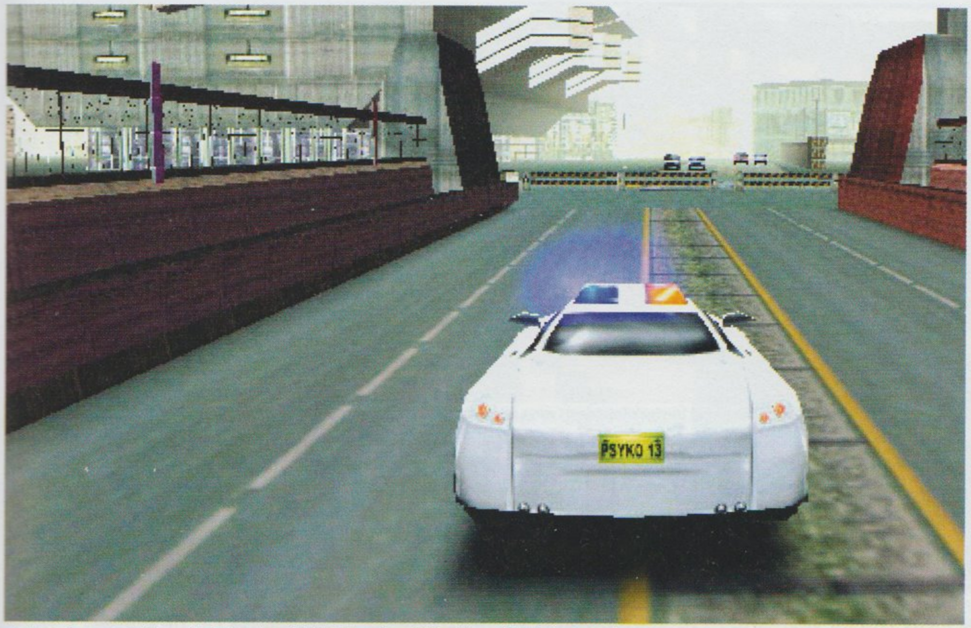
Can Sonic trust his worst enemy? Does Sara, the president's daughter, really want to marry him? And just who is this Hyper Metal Sonic guy?

All is revealed in this 60-minute cartoon action-adventure, available in shops now priced around £12. Sonic might be blue but, in case you hadn't guessed, his movie isn't – it's rated PG.

To be in with a chance of winning a copy of *Sonic: The Movie*, just answer the question below and send it, along with your name and address, on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to: *Sonic: The Movie* Compo, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Friday 19 November.

QUESTION: **HOW LONG IS SONIC: THE MOVIE?**

Terms and conditions: Only entries completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions (available on request) apply. And all that.



△ An early screenshot from the PC version of THQ's *Felony Pursuit*. Hey, it's not finished yet you know.

TH JOINS THE Q

Yet another major games publisher gets behind Dreamcast

AMERICAN GAME PUBLISHER THQ, the company behind the massively popular Nintendo 64 wrestling game *WCW/NWO Revenge* and recent PC release *Sinistar Unleashed*, have become the latest big-name company to back Dreamcast.

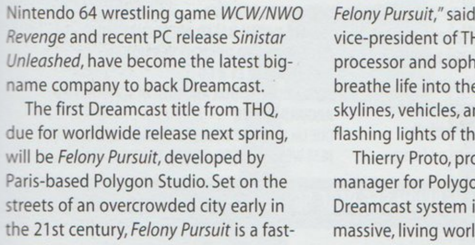
The first Dreamcast title from THQ, due for worldwide release next spring, will be *Felony Pursuit*, developed by Paris-based Polygon Studio. Set on the streets of an overcrowded city early in the 21st century, *Felony Pursuit* is a fast-paced car racing game that places you on either side of the law over the course of 38 missions.

"Dreamcast's next-generation capabilities set the perfect stage for *Felony Pursuit*," said Michael Haller, senior vice-president of THQ. "The 128-bit 3D processor and sophisticated graphics breathe life into the beautiful cityscapes, skylines, vehicles, and continuous flashing lights of the game."

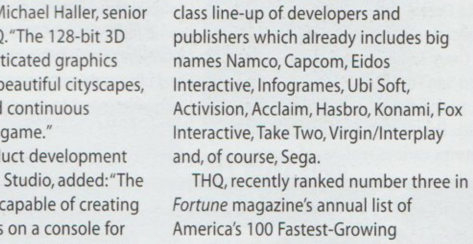
Thierry Proto, product development manager for Polygon Studio, added: "The Dreamcast system is capable of creating massive, living worlds on a console for the first time. This is precisely the kind of power that brings the high-speed missions of *Felony Pursuit* to life."

In pledging their support for Dreamcast, THQ have joined a world-class line-up of developers and publishers which already includes big names Namco, Capcom, Eidos Interactive, Infogrames, Ubi Soft, Activision, Acclaim, Hasbro, Konami, Fox Interactive, Take Two, Virgin/Interplay and, of course, Sega.

THQ, recently ranked number three in *Fortune* magazine's annual list of America's 100 Fastest-Growing Companies, are expected to announce more Dreamcast titles in the next month or so.

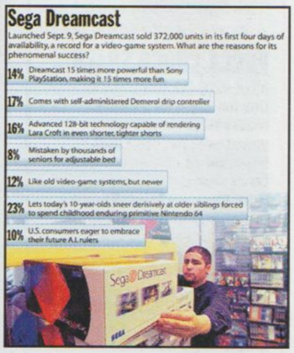


△ It was a quiet afternoon in Macclesfield town centre.



△ Yep, still pretty quiet around here. Anyone fancy a pint?

"I HAVE A DREAMCAST," CLAIMS MLK



Sega Dreamcast

Launched Sept. 9, Sega Dreamcast sold 372,000 units in its first four days of availability, a record for a video-game system. What are the reasons for its phenomenal success?

14% Dreamcast 15 times more powerful than Sony PlayStation, making it 15 times more fun

17% Comes with self-administered Demerol drip controller

16% Advanced 128-bit technology capable of rendering Lara Croft in even shorter, tighter shorts

8% Mistaken by thousands of seniors for adjustable bed

12% Like old video-game systems, but newer

23% Lets today's 10-year-olds sneer derisively at older siblings forced to spend childhood enduring primitive Nintendo 64

10% U.S. consumers eager to embrace their future A.I. rulers

Satirical newspaper *The Onion*, which specialises in running spoof news stories written in perfect – and painfully funny – journalize, ran an article in September explaining the reasons behind Dreamcast's phenomenal success in the United States.

According to the 'report', 14% of Dreamcast purchasers believed the console to be "15 times more powerful than Sony PlayStation, making it 15 times more fun"; 12% of those (not) polled said it was "Like old videogame systems, but newer".

The Onion is published in newspaper format in Wisconsin in the US, and is available on the Net at www.theonion.com.

Recent headlines have included 'New Smokable Nicotine Sticks – Can They Help Smokers Quit?', 'Rules Grammar Change – English Traditional Replaced To Be New Syntax With', and 'Aliens Demand More Positive Portrayal In The Media'. Funny.

CHAT WITH SEGA DIRECT!

Sega Europe have opened three separate phone line services dedicated to answering all your Dreamcast queries. Here are the details…

CONSUMER SERVICE LINE: 08456 090090
Call this number if you have a technical problem with your DC, or queries about where and when you can buy products. Cost: local call rates.
INTERNET SUPPORT LINE: 09066 544544
The number you need if you have any issues relating to your DC's Internet facilities, including the DreamKey software. Cost: 60p per minute.
HINTS & TIPS LINE: 09067 532222
This is the number to call for hints, tips and solutions for any of Sega's Dreamcast titles. Cost: 75p per minute.

- ***Please ask permission from whoever pays the bill in your household before making a call (and look right and left before crossing the road).***

EAT THIS! IN JAPAN

PUCCA CHOCO SNACK

MEIJI, ¥200 (£1.15)

Little fish-shaped bits of crunchy biscuit with strawberry flavoured yoghurt inside. They have a small hole on one side which looks as though it should make a whistling noise, but repeated blowing only results in a pressure-induced headache. The fruity inside makes a pleasant change from the chocolate snacks we're used to over here, but the overly crunchy casing means they don't go down too easily, even when softened with a mouthful of milk. Energy per 100g: 515kcal. *EL*

QUEEN'S NUTS

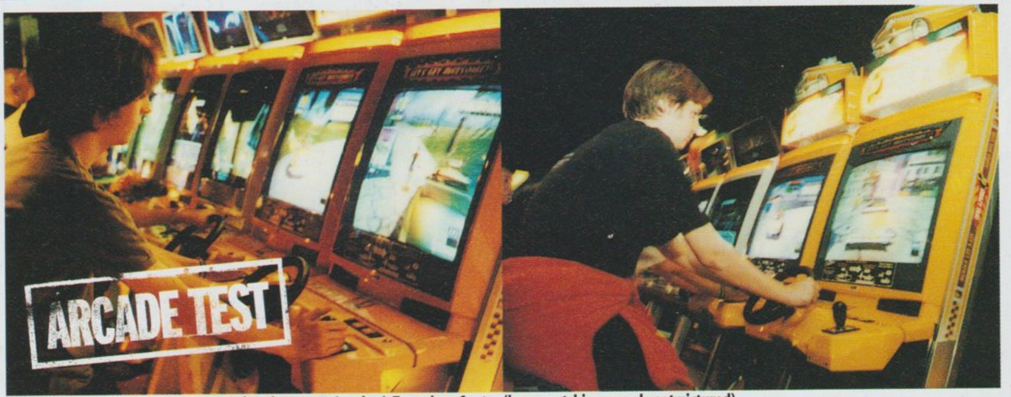
UNKNOWN, ¥285 (£1.64)

A simple enough idea – a bag of salted cashews and almonds mixed together in a foil bag. Though the nuts themselves are top quality, the combination of squishy soft cashew and crunchy almond doesn't work as well as more popular nut combos. Also, because there's a big difference in weight between the two types of nut, the top three-quarters of the bag ends up as cashews, while the almonds hide at the bottom; regular shaking is required for an even mix. Other Queen's Nuts combinations are also available. Energy per 100g: 594kcal. *EL*

HORN

MEIJI, ¥340 (£1.95)

Eight sticks of light chocolate wafer filled with smooth chocolate sauce and capped at both ends with thick milk chocolate. Squelchy innards contrast with crisp wafer to create a luxurious snack, but the servings are just too dainty to satisfy any fully grown human being. Alas, its petit nature means Horn must be reserved for polite coffee mornings. Undoing foil wrappers to get at each one makes them very frustrating during chocolate cravings too. Energy per 100g: 545kcal. *EL*



△ **Ed and Stuart put Sega's *Crazy Taxi* to the test at London's Trocodero Centre (huge watching crowds not pictured).**

CRAZY TAXI, COOL

ODM visits the local arcade to test drive Sega's madcap arcade racer, due on DC next year

ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES of the close relationship between Dreamcast and Naomi-based coin-ops (see below) is that you can take a sneak peak at forthcoming DC titles simply by going down to your local arcade. And that's just what we did.

Donning our shiniest puffy jackets, pockets stuffed with pound coins, we headed off to Sega World at the Trocodero Centre in London to spend an evening playing *Crazy Taxi*… and avoiding eight-year-olds asking for spare 'ciggies'.

Confirmed at the Tokyo Game Show as a definite Dreamcast release for next year (we expect it to arrive in the UK after Easter), *Crazy Taxi* is set in a city loosely based on San Francisco, complete with a seaside, park, heliport, bus terminal and university. Thanks to sponsorship deals it also features various real-world stores including Pizza Hut, Tower Records, KFC and Levi's. No Woolies though.

Playing as one of four different drivers (each with their own strengths and weaknesses, apparently) of a gas-guzzling yellow cab, the idea is simply to pick up customers and then follow the on-screen indicator to drop them off at their required destination. The faster – and crazier – you drive, the larger the fare you get and the bigger the timer bonus you receive.

Make no mistake, this is no Sunday drive. If you want the timer to last more than a couple of minutes you need to employ some highly advanced driving techniques (lightning-fast acceleration and breaking, and ultra-tight cornering is a must).

You also need to do some serious, seat-of-yer-pants route planning, carefully choosing either short, medium or long rides and utilising short cuts to the max.

We like *Crazy Taxi* a lot, although we're hoping that Sega (who've confirmed that they're including extra features in the Dreamcast version) add a little more depth – as fun as it is, we got bored seeing the same parts of the city again and again.

No news yet on whether the arcade soundtrack, which features The Offspring and Bad Religion, will remain intact. Still, TVs do have volume controls, right?

CRAZY TAXI: THE LOW-DOWN

DEVELOPER: **SEGA AM3**
FORMAT: **NAOMI-BASED ARCADE MACHINE (SIT-DOWN AND UPRIGHT VERSIONS)**
COST: **USUALLY £1 A GO**
AVAILABILITY: **MAJOR ARCADES IN LONDON AND AROUND THE UK**
DUE ON DC: **NEXT YEAR (PROBABLY AFTER EASTER)**
BEST WEBSITE: **HTTP://COME.TO/CRAZYTAXI**

FOR MORE INFO ON THE DREAMCAST VERSION SEE PAGE 56

WHAT IS... NAOMI?

Essentially Dreamcast's big sister, Naomi is the name of a high-powered arcade board designed by Sega to replace the company's prohibitively expensive Model 3 technology (as used for the arcade version of *Virtua Fighter 3*).

It's being used by more than a dozen different arcade developers including Capcom, Jaleco, Tecmo, Video System and, of course, Sega themselves.

Naomi-based machines utilise more memory than the Dreamcast console, but both use the PowerVR2 graphics system jointly developed by Japanese electronics giants NEC and British multimedia specialists Imagine Technologies (formerly known as VideoLogic).

This close architectural relationship makes it extremely easy for game developers to convert Naomi-based arcade titles on to Dreamcast with very few – if any – noticeable changes. Witness the 'arcade perfect' (or as good as) Dreamcast versions of Capcom's *Power Stone* (reviewed on page 78) and Sega's own *House Of The Dead 2* (page 86).

Not all Naomi-based titles will find their way to Dreamcast, but it's reasonably safe to assume that most titles, and certainly those that have proved successful in arcades, will do so eventually. We already know that games such as *Crazy Taxi*, *F-355 Ferrari* and *Dead Or Alive 2* are on their way to DC, and there are plenty more to come.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY, DAN TRENT**

REELY GOOD?

We tested Sega's fishing reel controller with other games so you don't have to

SO, YOU'VE BOUGHT *SEGA BASS FISHING* (reviewed on page 88) and the rod controller, so you'll soon be a pro at hauling in the monster bass. But what about other games? The rod might work wonders on the lake, but how does it fare on the football field or race track? We conducted a scientific experiment (kind of) using the reel with other games…

READY 2 RUMBLE

Winding the reel replaces the dodging and blocking, and it doesn't take much practice before the rod has you evading punches like a slippery eel on steroids. Spin it correctly and you can go into Rumble mode if you've got all the letters. Problems? The reel's sensitivity means that you can end up dodging when what you want to do is run away, resulting in a hefty beating. (*Ready 2 Rumble* is reviewed on page 66.)

……

UEFA STRIKER

Hammering the reel gives your player a speed boost, and dashing down the wing, turning inside and surging into the box is a cinch. The trouble is that with one hand reeling and the other moving, it's almost impossible to end your pacy run with even a half-decent shot. The result is matches where every player on the field appears to be Thierry Henry. (*UEFA Striker* is reviewed on page 82.)

……

BUGGY HEAT

Operation is simple: winding the reel accelerates your vehicle; the faster you reel, the faster you go. You can't get up a serious speed, of course – even at your best you're still likely to be overtaken by old women with zimmer frames – and worse still it knackers your wrist. Only worth trying if you're a masochist or a prodigious masturbator. Or both.

……

SUZUKI ALSTARE EXTREME RACING

Maybe it's easier with a motorbike. No such luck. Sadly, *Suzuki Alstare* is equally likely to leave you with nothing more than a painful muscle strain as your opponents roar off into the distance. It seems the only way to play driving games with the rod is if you have two, and challenge a mate to a rod-fuelled duel. Have plaster casts handy.

……

SONIC ADVENTURE

There's already a fishing sub-game in *Sonic*, and it's arguably better than *Sega Bass* anyway. Still, using a traditional controller changes the camera perspective, and the same goes for the reel. In practice, this makes the camera spin round Sonic as he makes his way through the levels – a bit like a swish music video. Makes it a challenge, for sure.

……

NFL BLITZ 2000

Winding the reel gives your player a turbo boost that not only enables him to run faster, but also lets him jump higher and slam the opposition with bone-crunching tackles. More frantic wrist work is required if you're to break through for a touchdown, but it does work a treat. Failure to manipulate the reel, D-pad and buttons, however, leaves you dumped on the floor. (*NFL Blitz 2000* is reviewed on page 99.)

ODM: So clearly the fishing reel works best with *Sega Bass Fishing*. Funny, that.

Dreamcast
START

GAMES NEWS

GETTING ZIPPY WITH IT

There's still no official word, but details are emerging from Japan on Sega's forthcoming Zip Drive, which uses 100Mb-capacity disks (as used by PC and Mac owners) to store data from games and the Internet. The unit, which is expected to go on sale next year, sits under the Dreamcast and features a USB port for connecting additional peripherals. We hope to bring you more info next issue.

SEVEN UP

Seven Dreamcast titles entered the top 20 console games chart in the United States in the week the console was released (September 5 to 11). Leading the Dreamcast onslaught in the number two position was *Sonic Adventure*, closely followed by *Soul Calibur*, Sega's *NFL 2000*, and *Ready 2 Rumble*. *Blue Stinger*, *House Of The Dead 2* and *Hydro Thunder* also featured.

MORE BASS

Sega of Japan have announced that work has commenced on a Naomi-based arcade sequel to *Sega Bass Fishing* (reviewed on page 88). No definite news yet on a Dreamcast conversion though.

NO TOMB RAIDER – YET

While it still remains a possibility for the future, Derby-based Core Design have furiously denied media reports that a *Tomb Raider* title is currently in development for Dreamcast. To date, the only DC game confirmed by the company is *Fighting Force 2* (shown above), which will be published later this year by parent company Eidos Interactive.

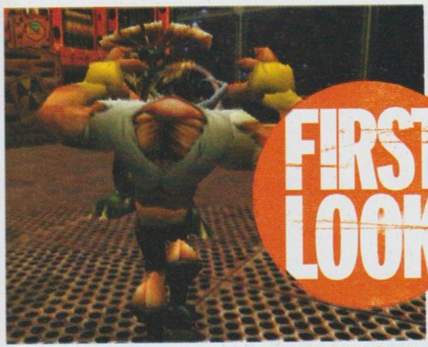
US FOOTBALL ON VM

As we were going to press, Sega released their first free mini-game, designed to be played on Dreamcast VM (Visual Memory) units. The American Football title, which uses 111 blocks of memory, is available free to Dreamcast owners from www.dreamcast.com. We can't confirm that the game is available to UK owners, but similar free releases are planned for Europe in the future.

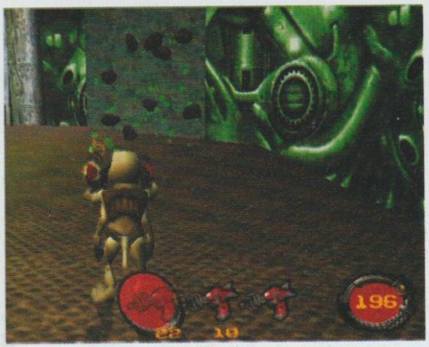
FIRST LOOK

MAD, MAD, MAD

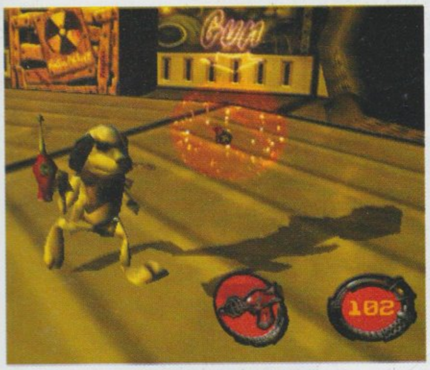
The forthcoming *MDK 2* is set to be full of strangeness. **ED LOMAS** meets the man behind Bioware



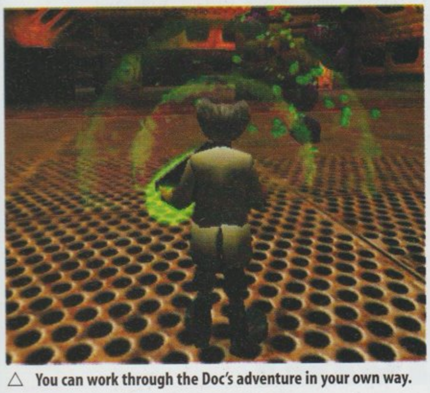
△ **Some items turn the Doc into an Incredible Hulk-style beast.**



△ **Three vastly different characters mean *MDK 2* could last ages.**



△ **Gun! Max can pick up and use four weapons at once.**



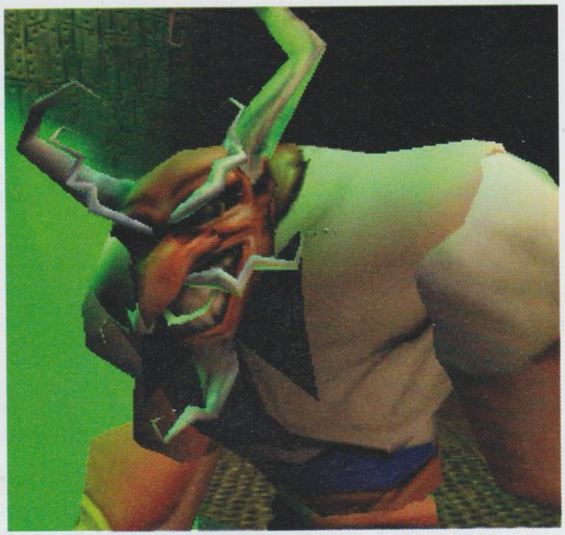
△ **You can work through the Doc's adventure in your own way.**

DON'T EVEN TRY to understand this game. Sample quote from Dr Greg Zeschuk, president and joint CEO of Bioware, the team behind *MDK 2*: "We're currently working on dancing fish, talking carrots and other such important game elements." And this man is a part-time practising medical doctor, for goodness sake.

If you've played the original *MDK*, a surreal adventure game set on a strange alien planet, and released on PC and PlayStation in 1997, you'll have some idea what we're in for with the sequel, but you might be surprised at just how much everything has been upgraded – strangeness included. There are now three playable characters, each with their own unique abilities and adventure to work through.

The original game's Kurt, wearer of the revolutionary Coil Suit, is the main hero. Attached to one arm he's got a machine-gun, which can be removed and strapped to his face to become a powerful sniper rifle (much like the long-distance weapons which made things like *GoldenEye* and *Metal Gear Solid* so popular). The suit also has a cool ribbon parachute built into the back of it, enabling Kurt to glide around between platforms and ride winds to higher areas. His adventure plays most like the first *MDK* adventure.

Max is Kurt's six-limbed cyborg dog who made a brief appearance in the original game. This time around, however, he's a fully playable character – and a hardcore one at that. Each of his four 'arms' (he walks on two of his six legs, you see) can hold a separate weapon, meaning he can kick ass with an Uzi, laser pistol, machine-gun and rocket launcher all at the same time! Unsurprisingly, Max's adventure is the most all-out shoot 'em up of the three.



△ **Mixing Vodka with Red Bull in his lab, Doc Hawkins created an evil potion.**

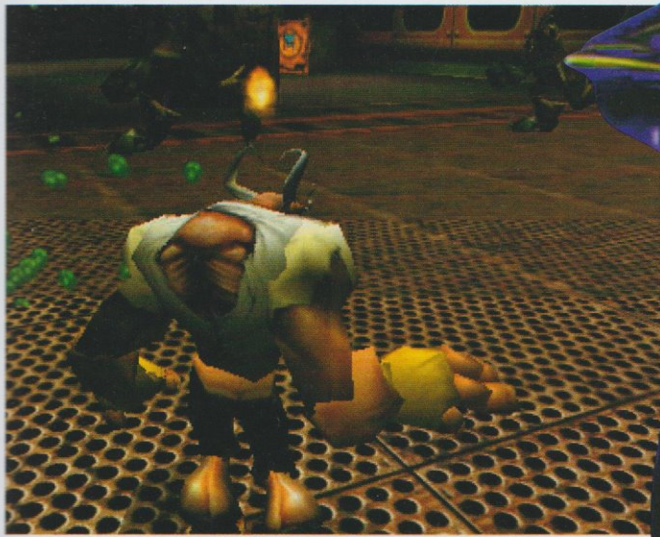
Dr Fluke Hawkins, Max's robot-implants surgeon and inventor of the Coil Suit, plays very differently again. His adventure is much more puzzle-based than the other two, with an ingenious object-handling system which promises masses of variety. When the Doc picks up an item, it goes into either his left or right hand's inventory. By holding two items at once and combining them, he can invent all sorts of new goodies. For example, going to work on a kitchen toaster with a rod of plutonium, he can make a deadly radioactive toast launcher – as long as he's got some bread to use as ammo. There are masses of possible combinations, many of which aren't essential for getting through the game but will provide you with different ways of tackling each level.

IT'S AN IMPROVEMENT

Even though the original *MDK* got rave reviews, it didn't go down too well with the man on the street (whoever he may be). It got very tough in places, and its bizarre look and unusual concept scared off the thickies looking for another bit of bland silicon slaughter. With the first game's developers Shiny working on other projects, Dr Greg's Bioware have the opportunity to create a sequel which will appeal to both fans and newcomers alike.

"I really enjoyed the original *MDK*. I think that the latter part of the game was very strong; the puzzles were really complicated and interesting. The only disappointment for me was that there wasn't quite enough story in the game", complains Greg. "I read the manual and found it to be

"DREAMCAST REALLY SMOKES. WE'VE GOT IT RUNNING FASTER THAN A PENTIUM III"



△ The weaker aliens throw their hands in the air and run away like girls when they see you.

totally daft – in a positive sense – but the game contained only a small fraction of the humour of the manual because its storytelling was so limited. This is one of the things we set out to improve in *MDK 2*". The graphics have been given a proper three-dimensional redesign, too.

Bioware have spent a lot of time working with Dreamcast to create an extremely impressive game engine which runs surprisingly well. "Dreamcast really smokes – we've got it running a little faster than a Pentium III 500MHz PC with a TNT2 3D card and we've still got some significant room for optimisation", says Dr Greg, adding that "anyone who isn't currently developing for Dreamcast is really missing out".

This kind of technical performance means that *MDK 2*'s elaborate architecture looks stunning – the massive alien structures appear completely solid, and are given an even more believable look with a variety of smart lighting and particle effects. But the most impressive thing is that it all runs so smoothly, even at this early stage.

ALIEN CREATION

With the technical side sorted, the team can get down to the part of game design we'd all love to have a go at, and create the level layouts and crazy set pieces which make the adventure itself (who wants to be an Iron Maiden-loving, Coca Cola-addicted programmer, eh?). "We're at the point where we can get totally creative inside the little world we've made. The specific work left is mainly populating and balancing the existing sections – about two thirds are done – and making the last few levels," Greg explains.

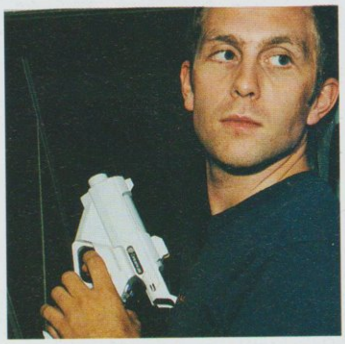
Aliens aren't just being placed randomly in the worlds, they're being given little lives of their own: some are busy working away when you come across them, and will stop what they're doing only when they notice you nearby. Using Kurt's sniper helmet you can zoom in really close on an unsuspecting enemy and watch exactly what they're up to – even listening in on their impossible-to-understand conversations – before popping their heads clean off with a single shot. You get a much better feeling of being on a real alien planet when its inhabitants don't just stand still waiting for you to run around a corner into them; though you can also get quite attached to the little fellas as you watch them go about their daily business so intently.

With the inclusion of all the elements which made the original *MDK* one of the most inventive and movie-like video games of its time, as well as a number of clever new ideas, *MDK 2* is looking very promising – and we haven't even seen the dancing fish and talking carrots yet.

It stands for Max Doc Kurt, by the way.

SWAP YA!

We're at your door, brandishing a Dreamcast and demanding a decision: do you stick with your old and reliable PlayStation, or go for something new and extra-bouncy fresh? **POGGY** investigates



△ **"Make my day, punk. Gimme a Dreamcast."**

EVERY SHARED HOUSEHOLD knows about the invaluable contribution a decent games console can make to keeping the peace. An inability to do the washing-up can be dismissed as an endearing character flaw when you can fatally gore the offender with a beat 'em up or run them off the road with a racing game.

Duncan, Matt, Kris and Tom live in London's sunny North, and the perils of a tiny kitchen and a highly slammable front door see our happy quartet sporting impressive cracked and peeling thumbs.

Despite recent investment in digital TV and a fondness for Scrabble, they remain avowed PlayStation users, favouring fighting games, with *Cool Boarders 3* for those Friday night after the pub dexterity tests.

After several years of blissful cohabitation, are they prepared to risk their idyll by taking the doorstep challenge and trading in their PlayStation and 30-odd games for a Dreamcast plus games?

Despite the recent price wars between PlayStation and the N64, our foursome have remained fiercely loyal to their first love. And with the majority of them employed in the IT industry they have an impressive list of reasons for their reluctance to ditch a faithful two-year relationship, "I'm not chasing some plumber around in a go-kart" being the dominant one. Arguments about prehistoric cartridge technology and unwieldy controllers follow.

However, after the initial 20 minutes of suspicion and "Is that a fishing rod? Do you get a club as well?" they're well on their way to *Toy Commander* heaven.

Duncan, our left-handed representative, is disappointed that, once again, his needs have been ignored. "It's good that the analog controller is included on the paddle, but it's about time left-handed controllers came in." He's also unimpressed with the machine, which he describes as an uglier, louder version of PlayStation.

Kris prefers Dreamcast's chunkier paddle design to PlayStation's more slimline model, which gave him hand cramps after an hour's intense *WipEout*.

In terms of games, Matt is concerned that *Sonic Adventure*, touted as the newest and shiniest in 3D gaming, is restrictive, leading you through the game, with little personal skill involved.

Tom disagrees. "With *Sonic* it's a flagship game, so they're more interested in showing what they can do with the graphics than with the actual gameplay, but with *Toy Commander* you're given a mission and pretty much left alone to decide how to do it."

Sega Bass Fishing, despite being one-player, receives almost unanimous praise from our foursome, with the living room resounding to cries of "Use the vibrator! Poppers!" in a not undisturbing way.

"Less exciting than a herd of turtles stampeding through peanut butter," says Kris.

The dominant difference between PlayStation and Dreamcast for this household is the latter's online gaming, Web browsing and email capabilities, none of which could be tried during the test, unfortunately.

Duncan, ever the voice of doom, thinks it's pointless to attempt to compete in a market that has been sewn up by PCs. Tom, on the other hand, a huge *Quake III* fan, points out that for those without PCs it's a top introduction to the joys of killing complete strangers.

The consensus from this house is that they would swap their existing console for a Dreamcast, but will wait to assess whether Sega, notorious for their in-house games, can drum up enough support from third-party developers to promote a greater variety.

It's best not to mess when something as critical as who cleans the bog rests on the result, after all...

△ **Is a PlayStation in North London about to get divorced after a happily bigamous life?**

PERSONALITY TRAITS

KRIS OVENDEN-HALL

AGE: 24
OCCUPATION: IT helpdesk
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *Gran Turismo*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *Sega Bass Fishing*
WOULD YOU TRADE YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? Yes

MATTHEW CRITCHLOW

AGE: 26
OCCUPATION: production controller
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *Moto Racer*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *Sega Bass Fishing*
WOULD YOU TRADE YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? Yes

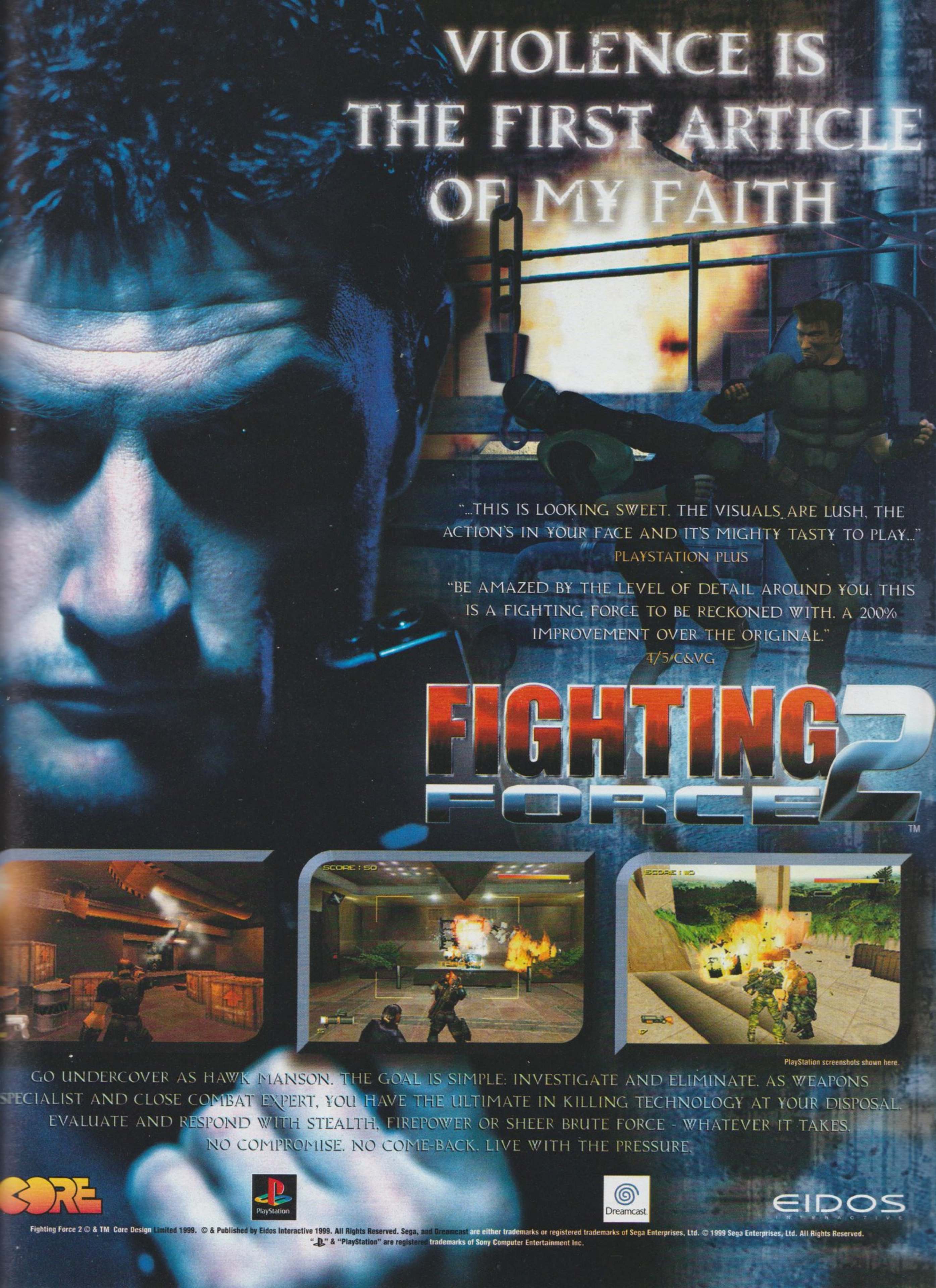
TOM WALKER

AGE: 23
OCCUPATION: multimedia customer support manager
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: *WipEout 2097*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *Toy Commander*
WOULD YOU TRADE YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? Yes

DUNCAN ROWE

AGE: 23
OCCUPATION: journalist
FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION GAME: EA Sports' *PGA Tour Golf '96*
FAVOURITE DREAMCAST GAME: *Sega Bass Fishing*
WOULD YOU TRADE YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A DREAMCAST? No

Calling all contestants... Have you got a friend who deserves to have us turning up on their doorstep when they least expect it? Someone who slags off your Dreamcast because they 'adore' their PlayStation or N64 so much? Want to really test your friend's resolve? Then drop us a line at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk with 'Doorstep Challenge' in the subject line, or write to Doorstep Challenge, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. To qualify, contestants must have a PlayStation in full working order (it's the first thing we'll be checking when we turn up) and a minimum of five games.


VIOLENCE IS THE FIRST ARTICLE OF MY FAITH
FIGHTING FORCE 2
TM
SCORE : 50
SCORE : 110

"...THIS IS LOOKING SWEET. THE VISUALS ARE LUSH, THE ACTION'S IN YOUR FACE AND IT'S MIGHTY TASTY TO PLAY..."
PLAYSTATION PLUS

"BE AMAZED BY THE LEVEL OF DETAIL AROUND YOU. THIS IS A FIGHTING FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. A 200% IMPROVEMENT OVER THE ORIGINAL."
4/5 C&VG

PlayStation screenshots shown here.

GO UNDERCOVER AS HAWK MANSON. THE GOAL IS SIMPLE: INVESTIGATE AND ELIMINATE. AS WEAPONS SPECIALIST AND CLOSE COMBAT EXPERT, YOU HAVE THE ULTIMATE IN KILLING TECHNOLOGY AT YOUR DISPOSAL. EVALUATE AND RESPOND WITH STEALTH, FIREPOWER OR SHEER BRUTE FORCE - WHATEVER IT TAKES. NO COMPROMISE. NO COME-BACK. LIVE WITH THE PRESSURE.

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WATCH THIS!
HOT DVD MOVIES

PAYBACK

Out: Now • Cert:18 • £15.99

Beefy thriller based on the same novel as Point Blank. Mel Gibson is seedy but honourable crook Porter who's stitched up by his wife and best mate and left for dead after a heist. Against all the odds he survives and goes after his share of the loot.

Watch out for *ER's* Maria Bello as Rosie the prostitute who helps him out, *Ally McBeal's* Lucy Liu as an Asian dominatrix, and a cameo appearance by original tough guy James Coburn. Extras-wise there are interview clips with Gibson, Belo, Liu and Coburn, and a widescreen version, too. *CE*

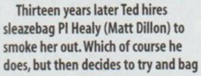
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY

Out: Now • Cert:15 • £15.99

Ben Stiller is super-nerd Ted, who's made up when lovely Mary (Cameron Diaz) asks him to take her to the prom. Due to a hiccup involving his nether regions and his zipper, the dream date is never realised though.

Thirteen years later Ted hires sleazebag PI Healy (Matt Dillon) to smoke her out. Which of course he does, but then decides to try and bag her for himself. It's hysterically funny.

The DVD version has commentary from the directors, a mad Behind The Zipper featurette, a music video and, er, a karaoke version of Buttercup. *CE*

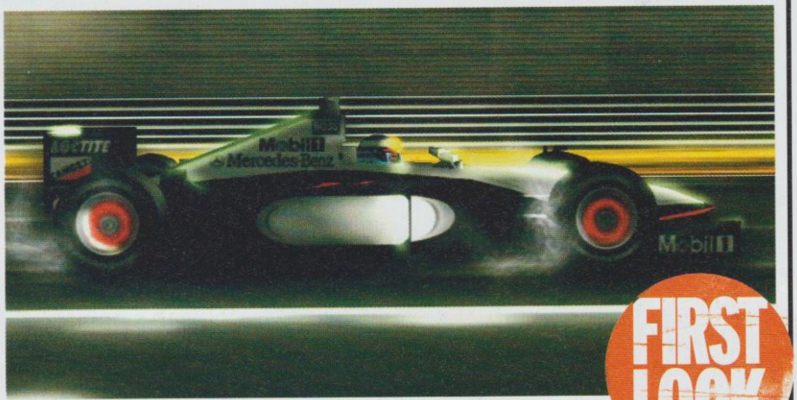


MASK OF ZORRO

Out: Oct 25 • Cert: PG • £19.99

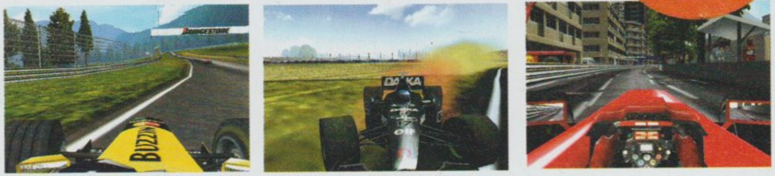
Sir Anthony Hopkins struts his stuff as the aging caped crusader who takes roguish Antonio Banderas under his wing to transform him into Zorro Jr. so that he can get revenge on the evil Spanish oppressor who kidnapped his daughter Elena (Catherine Zeta Jones) 20 years before.

Excellent DVD extras include a 'making of' documentary, director's commentary and a deleted scene. Oh, and the video to Tina Arena's theme song I Want To Spend My Lifetime Loving You. Which is nice. *CE*



FIRST LOOK

△ All the real drivers, all the real cars… but none of the real cigarette advertising.



△ Ooh, it's just like watching it on TV… without Murray Walker whining in your ear.

FORMULA ONE GOES DREAMCAST

The race for the title of top Formula One game is on as we take an exclusive first look at Video System's *F1 World Grand Prix For Dreamcast*

HOT ON THE HEELS of *Racing Simulation Monaco Grand Prix For Dreamcast* (reviewed on page 97) comes Video System's officially licensed Formula One game *F1 World Grand Prix For Dreamcast*, with all the cars and drivers from the 1998 season.

We visited the Manchester-based developer as they were putting the finishing touches to the game ahead of its Friday 5 November release. Making the most of a background of developing official F1 games across a variety of platforms, *F1 World Grand Prix* has been developed from the ground up, making full use of Dreamcast's power.

Head programmer Ben Sugden explained that the game is intended to satisfy both hardcore Formula One and simulation fans without isolating the more casual gamer. "If you want to, you can just pick up and play, but if you set the expert level you'll get penalised more often and the whole thing is more realistic."

Everything in the game, from the menu system to the car control, has been designed to enable you to navigate your way around the game at your own pace. Want to tweak the down-force and suspension settings? Go ahead. But if you can't be bothered then you can simply select the defaults that are tailored to the individual tracks and away you go.

The game certainly seems very playable but comes with an incredible amount of detail that should keep the most obsessed Grand Prix fans happy. Full size pit crews, tracks mapped from official FIA plans and cars detailed down to the last sponsor's sticker are all part of the package. Other features include a '1998 events' mode which incorporates all the crashes, breakdowns and retirements that took place over the real season. As Ben explains, "It makes the whole thing that much more immersive because, if you know about certain things that happened in '98, like the pile-up at Spa for instance, you can actually watch them happen."

Look out for a full review next issue, on sale Thursday 11 November, but in the meantime feast your eyes on these exclusive screenshots.

TWO EGGS, BACON & A DREAMCAST

A member of the public gets to try out a real living, breathing Dreamcast on Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast*

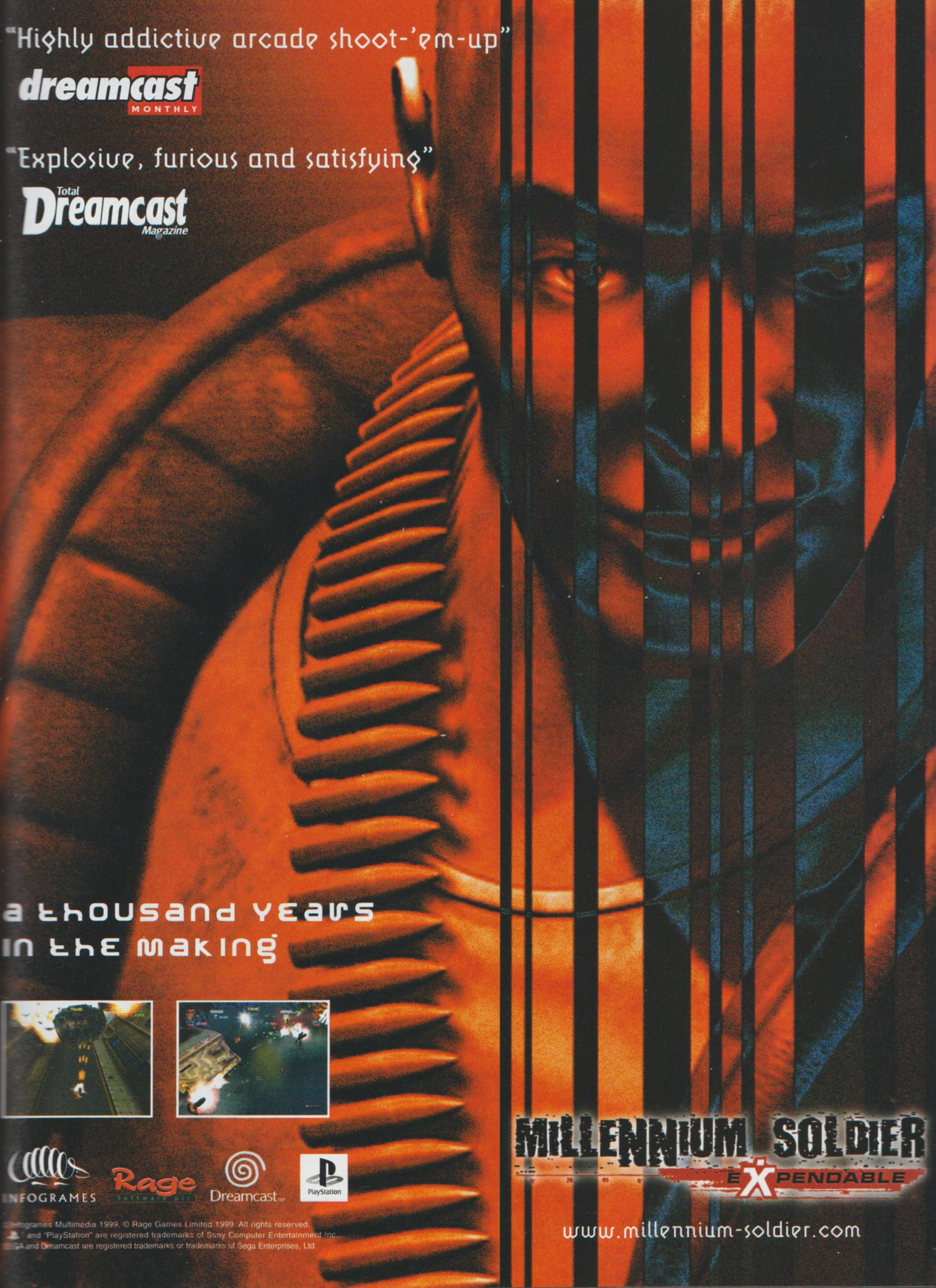
Early risers may have caught some Dreamcast action in early September when Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast* invited members of the public to battle it out on the console on live TV.

Co-host Johnny Vaughan attempted to distract the competitors – who'd been ordered to fast for 24 hours – by uncovering… a huge buffet spread!

Apparently one of the gamers was accused of cheating after failing a urine test. We wouldn't know though, because we were still tucked up in bed.

BETTER THAN

△ Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast*: on too early for us.


"Highly addictive arcade shoot-'em-up"
dreamcast MONTHLY
"Explosive, furious and satisfying"
Total Dreamcast Magazine
a thousand years
in the making
MILLENNIUM SOLDIER
EXPENDABLE
INFOGRAMES
Rage Software plc
Dreamcast
PlayStation
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VISIT THIS!
DREAM WEBSITES

dreamcast-europe.com

DREAMCAST EUROPE

Sega's official Dreamcast site for Europe may be fairly bland and corporate in content, but it's well worth a visit for its appearance alone. Some very slick interactive graphics lead you through all the usual information about Dreamcast, games and peripherals, and the site is certainly worth a look for those interested in all things Sega-related.
www.dreamcast-europe.com

fatlace
THE MAGAZINE FOR AGEING B-BOYS
NO.2

FAT LACE

Billing itself as "The magazine for ageing B-boys", Fat Lace is a satisfyingly down-to-earth look at life on the street. Featuring cooking tips from Schooly D, the infamous 'Crap Graff' study of useless graffiti, and links to loads of other cool sites, Fat Lace is definitely worth a butcher's.
www.fat-lace.com

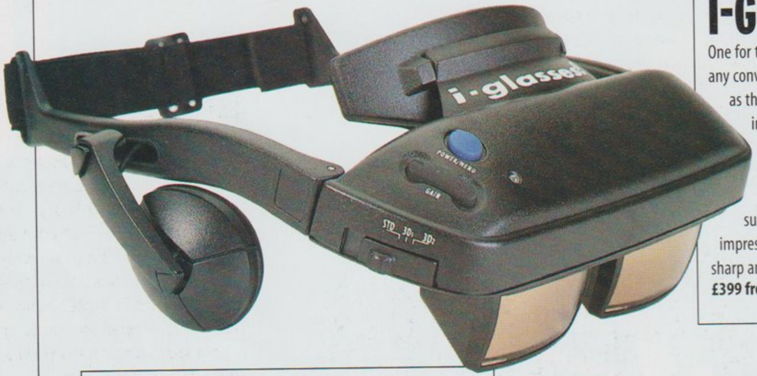
search
TVcream

TV CREAM

An exhaustive encyclopedia of TV trivia from the '80s, TV Cream starts out as one of those sites you'd like to say are for people with too much time on their hands, but then you find yourself there two hours later reading up on gems like *Streethawk*. There's also a directory of TV show themes to download to your MP-3 player.
www.tv.cream.org

TOYS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS...

More money than sense? Then look here for the essential guide to non-essential consumables. This month, get square-eyed the fast way, go deaf in style, and score a TV stand for the price of... er, a decent TV



I-GLASSES

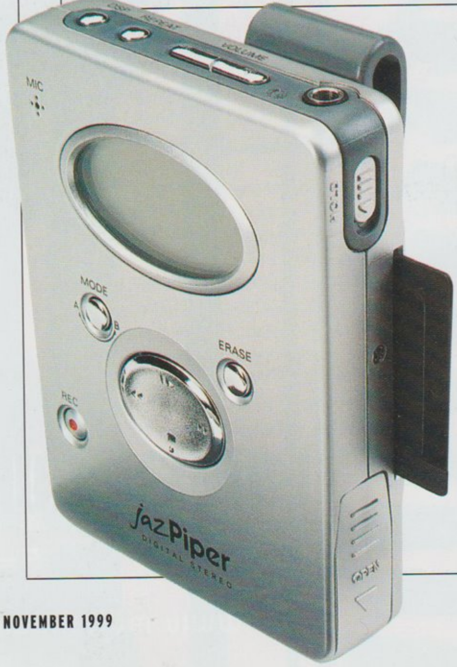
One for the nomadic gamer. Park yourself next to any convenient plug socket, plug in and off you go as the I-glasses' super-sharp LCD screens immerse you in your own little world.

The I-Glasses are apparently equivalent to watching an 80-inch screen from 11 feet away – a claim we have no way of substantiating. But it certainly sounds impressive. In use, the I-Glasses are surprisingly sharp and clear. Complete with stereo headphones.
£399 from Magnate: 0151 242 9500

JAZ PIPER MP3 PLAYER

This is the future of music on the move. Storing music as digital MPEG files, the Jaz Piper dispenses with the need for any moving parts, which means it can be both smaller than conventional formats and is completely jolt-free.

Simply download tracks from the Internet or save them from CD. The tiny Jaz Piper also serves as a dictaphone and can store up to 64Mb of music when used with a removable SmartMedia card. Sound quality is not far below MD or CD.
£140 from Cowan/Elex Business Systems: 0181 842 3777



TANITA
口臭のレベルを
4段階表示
fresh
kiss

JVC RD-MD5

JVC's radical Boomblaster technology has been around for a while already but their new MD5 minidisc player takes the design beyond the funky-looking blasters we've seen already.

Featuring all sorts of new-fangled components and cutting-edge design, it delivers its frankly brutal levels of bass through a series of ports and two huge woofers. Suffice to say the sound is way out of proportion to the size of the machine, and the minidisc deck means you can create your own bangin' compilations to make the most of the power.

£295 from JVC: 0208 450 3282

JVC
RD-MD5
DREAMCAST
MD
CD

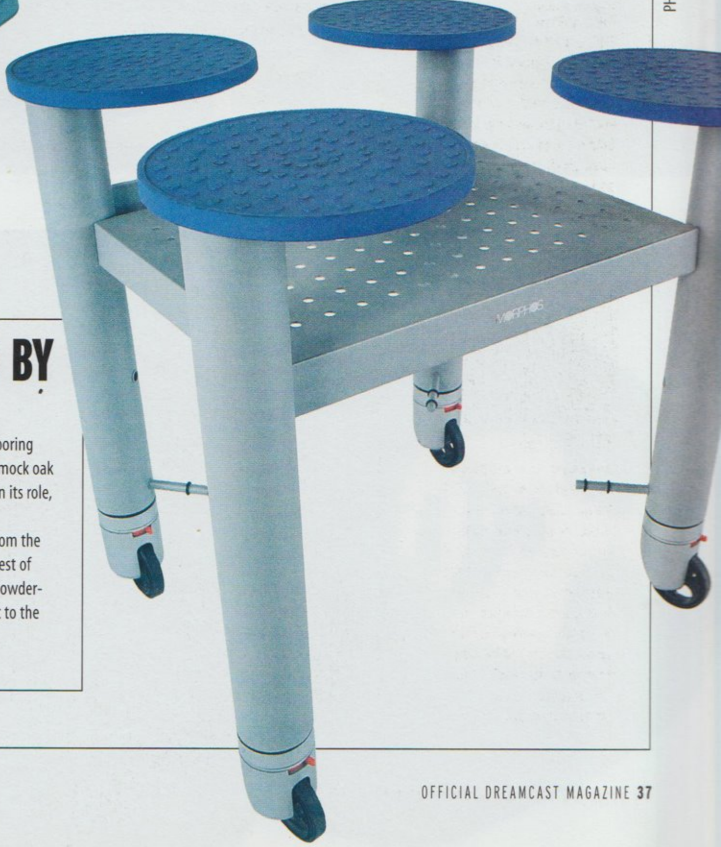
TANITA FRESH KISS

Japan is always a great source of weird, wonderful and ultimately useless gadgets, and the Fresh Kiss is just that. A kind of breathalyser for the halitosis-concious cassanova, you breathe into it and it rates the kissability of your breath to help you decide whether tonight's the night, or you might as well sack it off and go get a kebab.

Suspicion that the device is simply there to flatter your ego was aroused when it was passed around the office and – surprise, surprise – everyone scored highly on the kissability rating (we don't need a gadget to tell us that!). We even tried it on a dog to see if we could get a negative response, but the pooch came up as more kissable than any of us! Now that just can't be right…

¥3,860 (£22) from a shop in Tokyo

PHOTOGRAPHY: **HUGH THRELFALL**

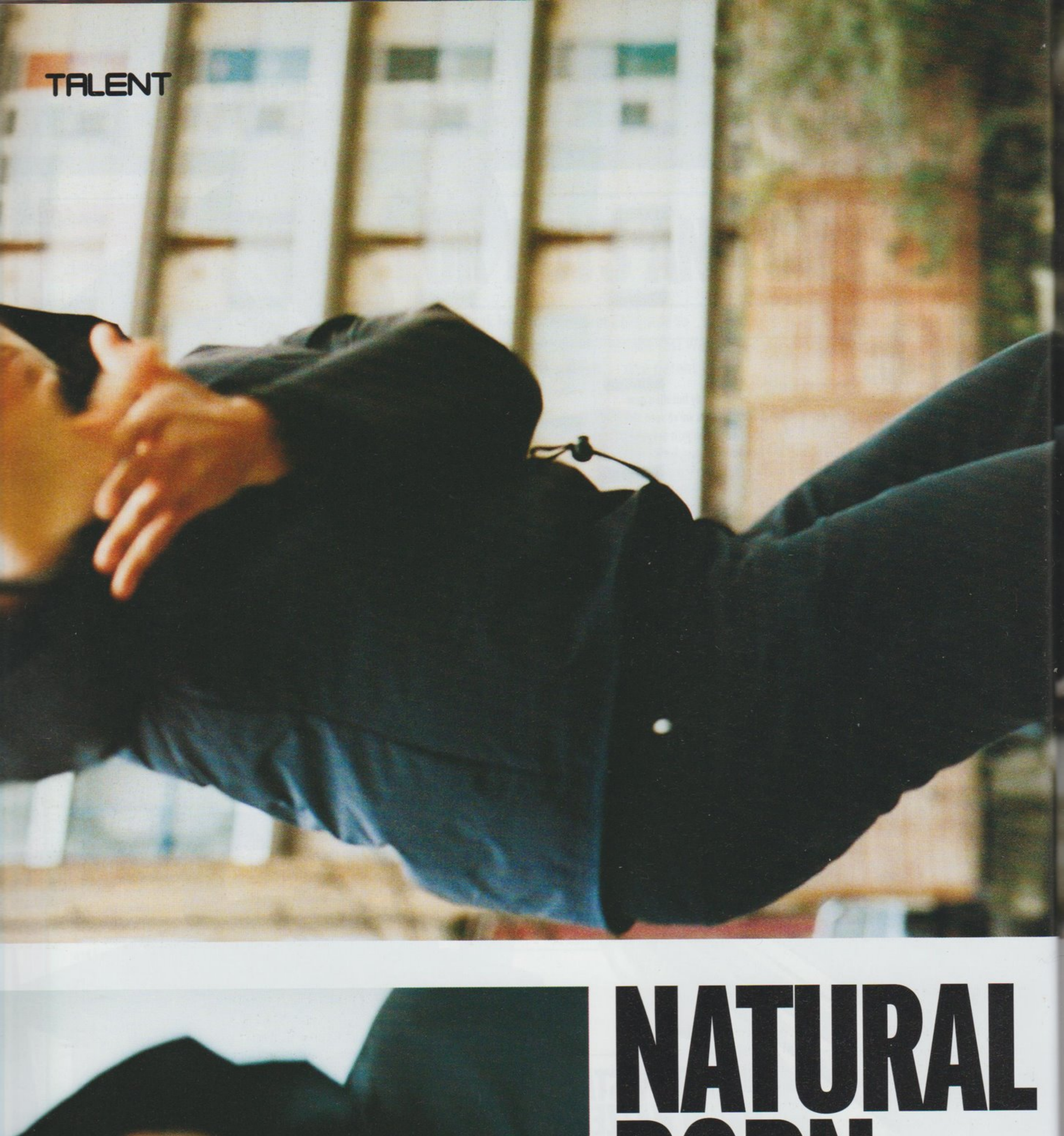


JUMBO TV STAND BY MARIO MAZZER

TV stands tend to fall into one of two types: the boring plastic one that came with the telly, or a chintzy mock oak horror from MFI. Granted, it is strictly functional in its role, but that doesn't mean the thing can't be cool.

Mario Mazzer's TV stand distinguishes itself from the mundane norm. Sturdy enough to take the heaviest of widescreen tellies, and constructed from sturdy powder-coated steel, it will bring a piece of industrial chic to the corner of any living room – at a price.

£350 from Purves & Purves: 0171 580 8223



NATURAL BORN KILLER

PHOTOGRAPHY: **TANYA CHALKIN**

"WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING SOMETHING LIKE *VIRTUA FIGHTER*, YOU'RE ACTUALLY EXERCISING YOUR MIND"

MEET BRITAIN'S *VIRTUA FIGHTER* CHAMPION

"WHEN YOU'RE ANGRY YOU CAN'T FOCUS on a game, especially if you're playing someone else," says recent Multimedia Computing graduate Hatim Habashi, shortly before throwing his hapless *Virtua Fighter 3tb* opponent ten feet into the air and then kneeing him on the way down.

You see, according to Scottish-born Hatim, the secret of success in the game is controlling your aggression.

"It's like a chess match," he claims, possibly as a result of watching too many dodgy martial arts movies, "you've got to keep calm."

Still, the guy knows a thing or two about this game. Back in 1995 he beat more than 200 finalists from all over the country to win the official Sega UK *Virtua Fighter 2* Championship. The prize? An arcade machine worth a cool £5,000.

Now working within the industry at Electronic Arts, Hatim has been playing beat 'em ups – originally *Street Fighter II*, then *Virtua Fighter* and its sequels – in arcades since the late '80s.

"I love technical games," he explains with infectious enthusiasm. "With *Virtua Fighter 3* you really have to think about what you're doing. It's the best beat 'em up ever. Definitely. It looks better than *Tekken 3*, it plays better, it feels better."

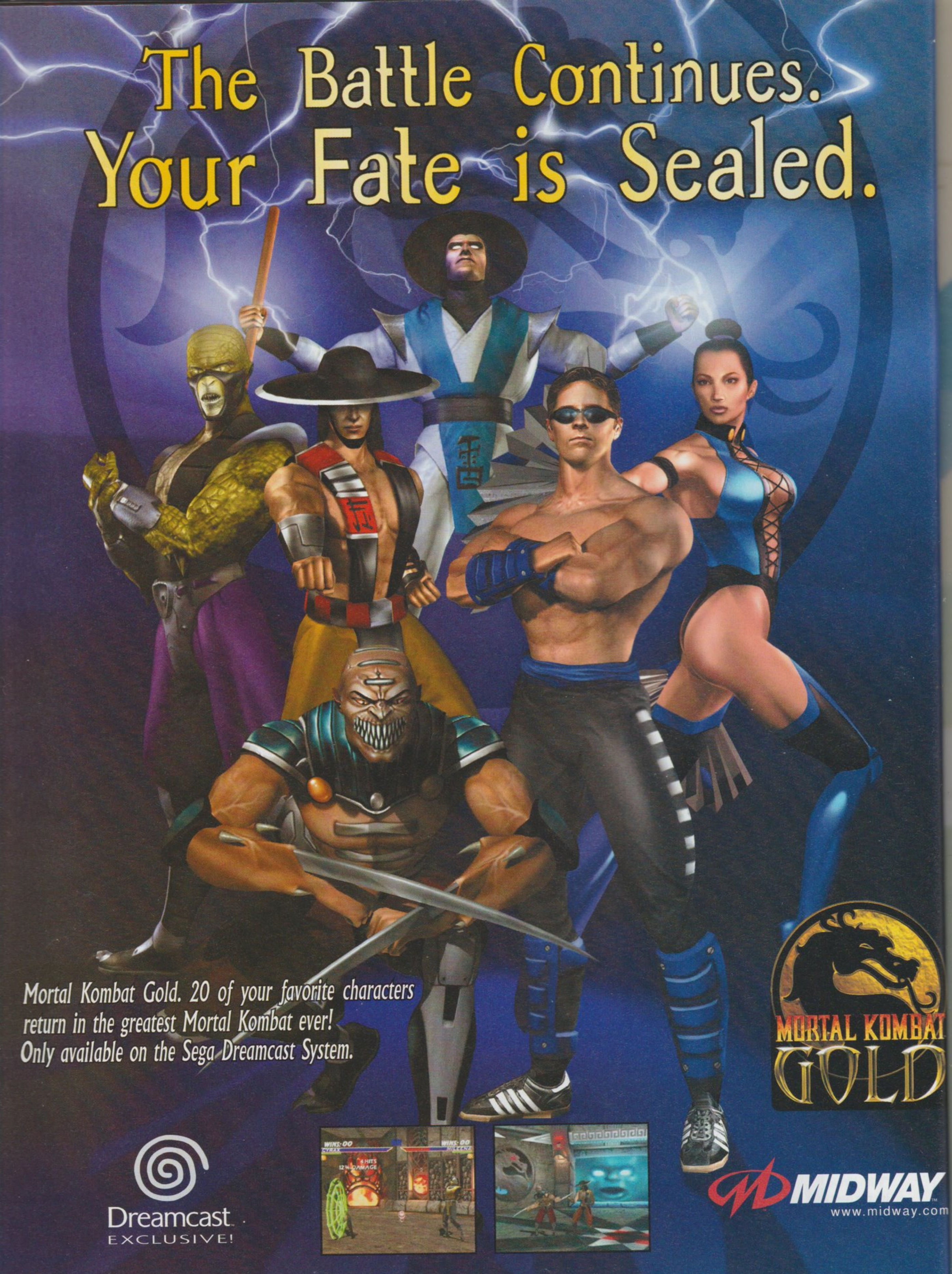
A friend sent Hatim a Dreamcast from Japan shortly after its launch at the end of last year, and he likes it a lot: "I think it's a really good machine. *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is very, very good, and *Soul Calibur* has to be the coolest looking game around. But I'm looking forward to seeing what Dreamcast can *really* do. I don't think the current games have really taken full advantage of the console."

The big question is, can Hatim still claim to be the best *Virtua Fighter* in the country? "Well there's one guy I know, Ryan, who's definitely better than me," he admits ruefully. "He's a champion at everything. Young blood, you know? He's, like, 18."

Nevertheless, potential challengers can still catch Hatim – now something of a gaming veteran at the grand old age of 24 – at various London arcades, such as the Namco Station at County Hall in London on Friday and Saturday nights.

Yep, even now he prefers playing games in arcades to going to pubs or clubs. "To be honest I find it more stimulating," he explains. "You go to a nightclub – all that smoke, all the drink – it just, like, clouds your mind. When you're playing something like *Virtua Fighter*, you're actually *exercising* your mind. And you're socialising with people as well, you see? Everyone's got their own way of having fun."

Warren Chrismas


The Battle Continues.
Your Fate is Sealed.
WINS: 00
WINS: 00
4 HITS
12% DAMAGE
MORTAL KOMBAT
GOLD
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EXCLUSIVE!
MIDWAY
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Mortal Kombat Gold. 20 of your favorite characters return in the greatest Mortal Kombat ever! Only available on the Sega Dreamcast System.

Midway Games Limited • Macmillan House • 96 Kensington High Street • London W8 4SG United Kingdom

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EUROSTAR

THE MAN FROM SEGA WHO PUTS THE EUROPEAN GAMES INTO DREAMCAST

I'M MAKING MY WAY TO SEGA EUROPE'S headquarters in West London when it occurs to me that the man I'm about to meet – Naohiko Hoshino, director of product development and third-party licensing – is in fact one of the company's most important employees. After all, what's the use of creating a white box of technical wizardry and then backing it up with a multimillion-pound advertising spend if the games aren't any good?

"Arrrrgh!" is the response when I put this to the man himself. "You're the same as the guys in this company! Always giving me pressure. 'Give me quality titles. Give me quality titles.' All the time!"

Whoops, sorry.

A ten-year veteran at Sega (bizarrely, he started his career selling 8-bit Master Systems to the Japanese Air Force), Hoshino has spent the last four years building Sega's relationship with the European development community and studying the marketplace.

"I thought: 'Why is PlayStation successful, not only in Japan and the United States, but also in Europe?' [I think it's] because Sony had software dedicated to the European market, like *Destruction Derby* and *WipEout*".

It's no coincidence that Sega are now fully committed to delivering not only the best imports from Japan and the US, but also European-developed Dreamcast games. Indeed, of the 30 or so titles that Sega themselves intend to publish in the next 12 months, at least seven are being developed by external studios across Europe.

Hoshino cites *Toy Commander* (reviewed on page 80), the first of these so-called '1.5-party' titles, and *Sonic Adventure* as his favourite Dreamcast games so far. But what's a graduate in modern American literature and lover of history, culture and architecture doing working in the videogames business?

"I think games can change our lifestyle in the future," he tells us. "In our youth there was no such thing; on rainy days we'd read books or play with toys or something like that. These days the young generation play games from early stages, and those people's imaginations might be quite different from ours.

"Is this a good thing or bad thing? I don't know, but it might really change our lives. That could be really exciting and fantastic. And that's why I work at Sega."

Warren Chrismas

"I THINK GAMES CAN CHANGE OUR LIFESTYLE IN THE FUTURE"

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY**

LETTERS

This is where we empty the contents of your brains all over a page of the mag. The biggest talking point this issue is last month's special edition of ***OFFICIAL DREAMCAST MAGAZINE***

PRAISE INDEED

Come September, I knew the flood of Dreamcast magazines would begin, so I bought all the available mags – and then one. One with a unique silver cover. Excellent. Su-bloody-perb. A magazine for console/computer freaks, and us normal let's-kick-some-alien-butt kinda guys/girls. You've done a brilliant job with the special edition. It's that good that this is the first time I've subscribed to a magazine – or write to one, for that matter.

Finally, I have to know if, being the official Dreacmast Magazine, you're going to put lock-out codes on the cover CDs so that anyone with an import console can't play them. Secondly, the name Ed Lomas rings more than a couple of bells – which magazine was he last on?

Paul Lawrence, via email

There will indeed be a country lock-out on our cover CDs, which means you won't be able to use it on an import machine. The same goes for all Dreamcast games released in this country.

As for Ed, he used to work for another games magazine not worthy of a mention in these hallowed pages.

DON'T DO IT AGAIN!

The very first thing I read in ODM was the Editor's intro. He, he, he! You certainly know how to reduce your readership and offend the majority of game players. I actually happen to be one of those "myopic computer geeks who's totally obsessed with games". For your information Mark, the majority of gamers wear glasses, as do a lot of society.

At first I thought ODM would be different to other mags, perhaps even worth buying every month. It turns out it's another uninteresting read aimed at the casual gamer. Unfortunately, you're going to sell really well, thanks to the cover CD.

Your mag isn't worthy to wipe the arse of an Otaku like myself. The problem with the industry is that there are more casual gamers than Otakus. This was due to Sony' PlayStation. Eventually though, because of idiots like you encouraging these "my console impresses the ladies, do you want a go on *Virtua Fighter* for a five minute laugh before going down the boozer" morons that plague the industry, the games market will eventually collapse in on itself.

One very pissed-off Otaku, Cambridge.

I take it you won't be turning to the fashion feature on page 104, then?

HOW MAD DO YOU LOOK?

Everyone pulls stupid faces while playing games, but we reckon they don't come any dafter than our Stuart. We gave him Sega Bass Fishing and the accompanying fishing rod, and for the rest of the day he pulled the sort of expressions that even Les Dawson would have been proud of. Which set us thinking.

Can anyone come up with a funnier pic than the one above? Send us pics of your face while playing games, and senders of any we print win a free Dreamcast game. Mail your entries to: Stupid Faces, ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, or email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk, using the subject heading 'Stupid Faces'.

MISSING MODEM

Can you tell me why the import Dreamcast machine I own did not come with a modem? They have the expansion slots but no modem, just a blanking strip. I'd like to know if we can buy an add-on modem for the machine, as I don't want to miss out on the Web access and online gaming.

Neil Hewitt, via email

It sounds like you have a Dreamcast from Hong Kong – currently the only place where they're sold without modems. Plug-in modems may become available in the long term, but even then you won't be able to use it online in the UK because Dreamcasts have territory lock-outs. Sorry, but buying an import console really isn't a good idea.

QUALITY PICTURE

I paid my deposit for a Dreamcast weeks ago at my local Blockbuster Video. One thing has been bugging me: nobody seems to know whether a SCART cable or an RF cable comes with the UK machine. If no SCART cable is available, will I be able to buy one at launch? I've asked all the local shops and they can't answer me.

J. Gordon, Ayrshire

I like the easy ones. A SCART cable comes with the machine so you can connect it to any SCART-compatible TV.

TIME WARP

I noticed some omissions in your Future Of Gaming article. Firstly, the Megadrive was launched before the SNES, highlighting that the extra time Sega had over Nintendo made a big difference. The omissions were the Mega-CD which was Sega's first real failure, Nintendo's aborted Super CD for the SNES, and the Atari Lynx, the first 16 bit hand-held. It would have been nice to see the C64, 3DO and Neo Geo mentioned as well. I believe that the 3DO and Philips CDi were both the kind of machine that we are all expecting to see eventually as the standard, but they were released too far ahead of their time.

Nathan Baseley, via email

We quoted UK (not Japanese) launch dates.

NICE MOVES

I think Sega have got it right this time for the following reasons:

1. They've got at least a one-year head start on Sony and Nintendo.

2. There is a huge list of games due for release before Christmas (Nintendo's biggest mistake with the N64).

3. Arcade conversions are plentiful, and online capabilities are unique.

4. The master stroke has to be the Windows CE platform, making it easy to port PC games to Dreamcast. This gives Sega a huge catalogue of games to port to their new machine.

Tony Grashion, via email

And don't forget the Visual Memory unit.

HAPPY TO WAIT

The reason for the launch delay isn't clear, but the press release harped on about BT so we assume the online bits weren't ready. The online aspect is exciting, but I'm sure Joe Punter would be happy to get his hands on the machine on 23 September then wait three weeks for the online bit.

Terry Charleton, via email

You may be happy to wait, but there are plenty of people out there who want it up and running from the moment they hand over their cash.

READERS WRITE

Is there any chance we may see some form of 'reader-review' section in future editions?

Stephen Case, via email

Absolutely. We're starting a section where we encourage readers to write in with their opinions of the latest games, then we'll print the comments in our Vibe section. If anyone wants to write in, keep your comments brief and address them to ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ, or email them to letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk, using the subject heading 'Reader Reviews'.

PAPER PROMISES

I have a few reservations about Dreamcast. On paper it all looks very nice – 128 bit processor, high-resolution capabilities, GD-ROMs, a high-speed modem – but games aren't played on paper, and games are the console's main weakness. Sure, there are ten games at launch, but most seem to be missed opportunities. Take *Sonic* and *Sega Rally 2* as examples.

***Sonic* should have been DC's *Mario 64*. It should have been a ground-breaking, mind-blowing game that changes the platform genre forever. Instead it's fairly good and pretty, but with flaws like the camera and glitching and a short lifespan.**

I've played *Rally 2* in the arcades and I must admit I was staggered. It combines the wonderful handling of *Colin McRae Rally* with graphics that haven't been seen on a home console. However, it doesn't have Net support (and when it does you'll have to buy a new copy of the game), which relegates it to a prettier version of a title you can buy for £20. The rest of the launch games (with the exception of *TrickStyle* and *Power Stone*) are either devoid of originality (eg *Virtua Fighter 3tb*) or year-old PC ports.

Ben Foster, via email

How can you look at games like *Ready 2 Rumble* and *Toy Commander* and not be impressed? There are now 18 launch games but as with any such launch, you never see games which immediately utilise the full capabilities of the system. It takes time for developers to get to grips with what can be done. Despite this, *Sonic* and *Rally* are both awesome games, and they do a good job of demonstrating some of what can be achieved with Dreamcast. They're certainly leagues ahead of any game on any other system. Get a Dreamcast and see for yourself.

The really exciting stuff is yet to come, as you'll discover next issue – see page 64 for more details and get back here on Thursday 11 November.

EARLY ADOPTER

Being the proud owner of a Japanese Dreamcast since launch, I've been awaiting the inevitable tidal wave of Dreamcast-related magazines with considerable interest. ODM is a compelling cover-to-cover reading and stands head and shoulders (not just in physical dimensions) above the rest – putting many of the multi-format mags to shame! Don't change a thing. My subscription's in the post!

Stephen Case, via email

Thanks.

CONTACT INFO: We want to hear from you. Address your letters to: Mailbox, Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Alternatively, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk. And if that's not good enough for you, why not contribute to our regular online chat forum - simply point your Web browser at www.dreamcastmag.co.uk (or click on the ODM button on the Dreamcast portal site) and follow the instructions.

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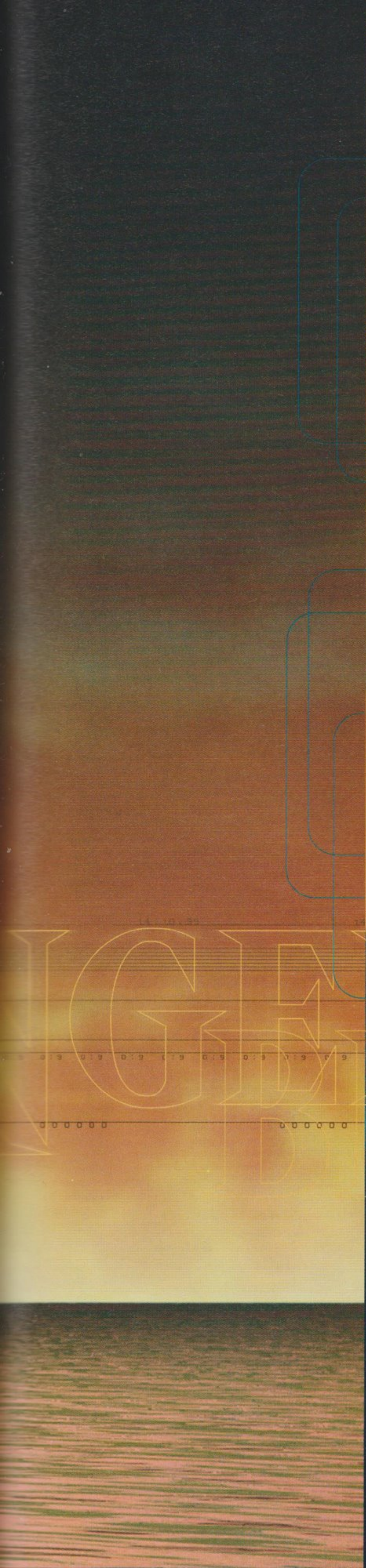
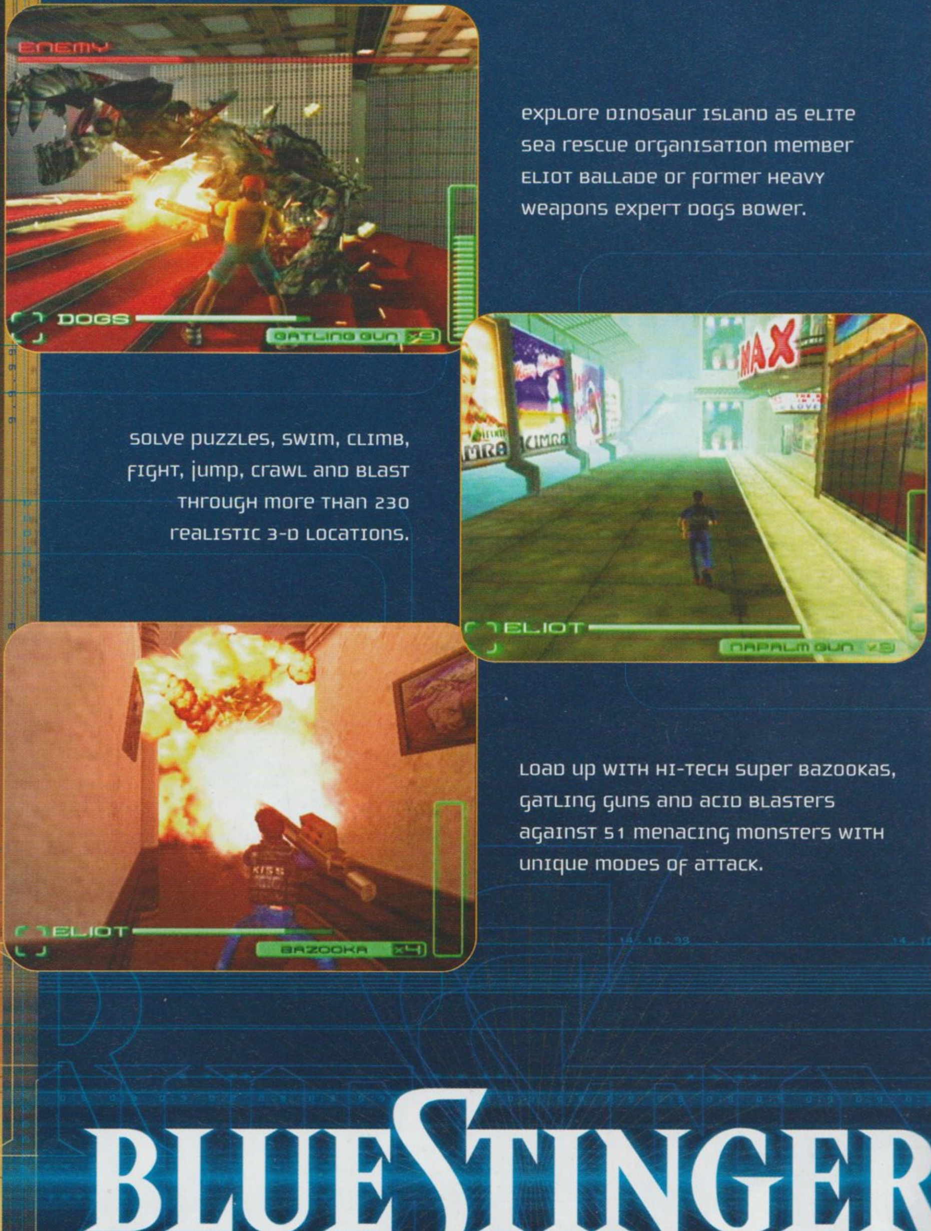


point of impact: dreamcast™



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Dreamcast

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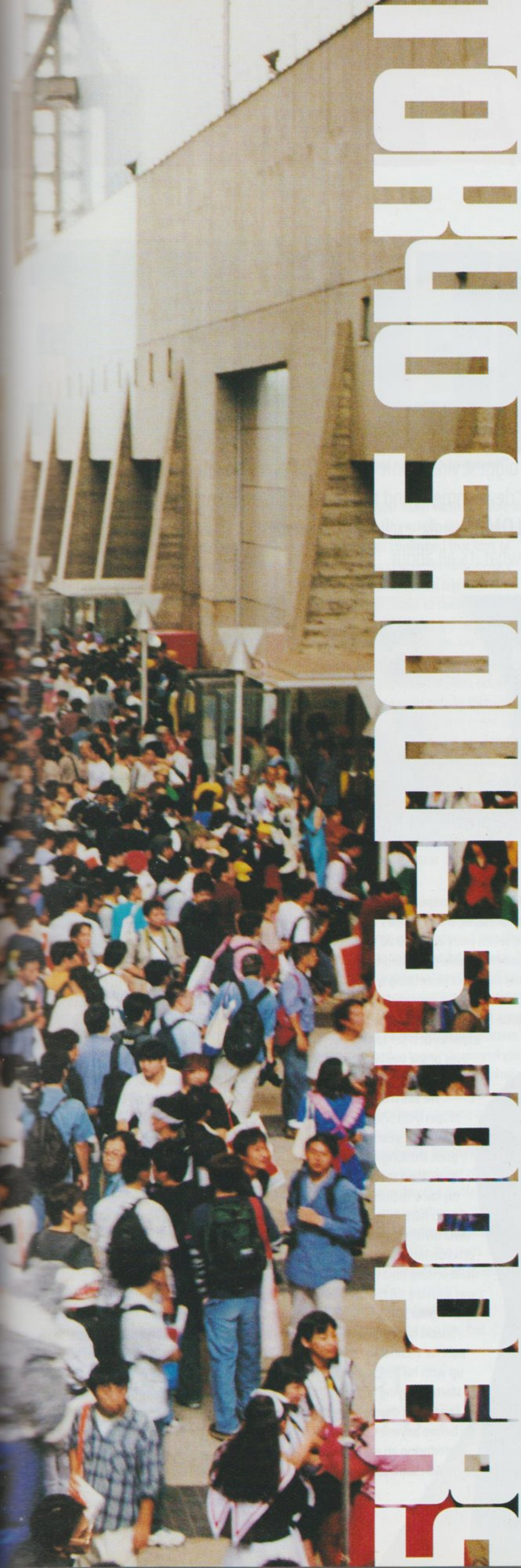
△ Sega's Dreamcast stand was the biggest at the show. On the two busy public days, people queued to play the games and download VM goodies.

▷ Hundreds of people flowing from the train station, all carrying free Dreamcast bags.

TOKYO SHOW-STOPPERS



TOKYO GAMESHOW '99 AUTUMN
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We went to Tokyo to bring you the inside dope on all the upcoming Dreamcast games. Rising in the East: **ED LOMAS**

IN JAPAN, VIDEO GAMES have a very different image from the one we're used to in the UK: spotty little kids alone in their bedrooms, killing goblins obsessively, stopping only to eat corned beef sandwiches and watch *Red Dwarf* repeats. Even though millions play games regularly, this nerdy image is still stuck in the minds of most people – the gamers themselves included. But in Japan video games are just as acceptably 'cool' as music and movies. They reach right the way through society, with people of all backgrounds and all ages throwing themselves into gaming without any fear of being labelled a 'geek'.

The recent Tokyo Game Show was a perfect demonstration of this, as over 160,000 video game fans turned up to check out the latest games. These fans were of all ages, from toddlers to OAPs (fact: a special half-price ticket was even available for atomic bomb victims), and the male/female ratio was more than we're ever likely to get in the UK. None of them were embarrassed by their interest in gaming – not even the hundreds obsessed enough to dress up as their favourite characters. After waiting in a mile-long queue for hours, the crowds were finally let in to sample the festival atmosphere and play next year's hottest games.

Sony chose the Tokyo Game Show to reveal their upcoming PlayStation 2 to the world, with a few playable games along with a number of impressive rolling demos. *Gran Turismo 2000* played like the original *Gran Turismo* with better graphics, and *Tekken Tag Tournament* played like *Tekken 3* with better graphics, unsurprisingly. But these 'better graphics' improvements weren't anywhere near enough to blow people away – the general feeling was that Dreamcast had all the most exciting software. The most popular choice for Game of the Show wasn't even a playable one – instead, video footage and special presentations convinced everyone that the most exciting (and best-looking) title was genius designer Yu Suzuki's epic *Shenmue*. Find out more over the page…

LIVE & DIRECT FROM
JAPAN
SPECIAL REPORT

SHENMUE

The biggest videogame production ever is nearing the end of its seven-year development, and the world still hardly knows a thing about it. **ED LOMAS** spoke exclusively to *Shenmue*'s mastermind, Yu Suzuki, to see what it's all about

PHOTOGRAPHY: **LUMLEY**

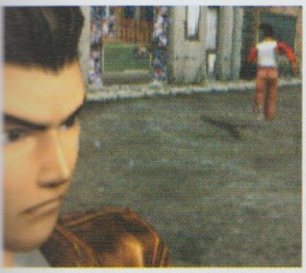
WHEN THE MAN responsible for 15 years' worth of classic arcade games says that he's spent seven years and over 20 million dollars on his first console-dedicated title, it's only natural to expect something special. But few people would have expected something quite on this scale – the *Shenmue* experience is set to take over the lives of the world's gamers for many years to come.

"We started working properly on *Shenmue* just over three years ago, but I've been thinking about it for more than seven years", explains Yu Suzuki, head of Sega's massively-successful AM2 division. "I was considering China as the main setting for a game while I was working on the original *Virtua Fighter*".

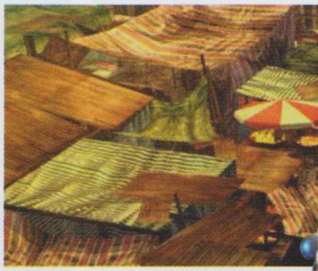
Suzuki has been forced to wait for technology to catch up with his vision, though he started playing with Dreamcast development kits before anyone else, producing an early demo which showed a massive tower surrounded by cluttered streets not unlike *Shenmue* 's. Because they've had time to get to grips with the way Dreamcast works, Suzuki's team have pushed the console to new, undreamed-of levels – *Shenmue* can be described as Dreamcast's first true second-generation game.

VIRTUA REALITY

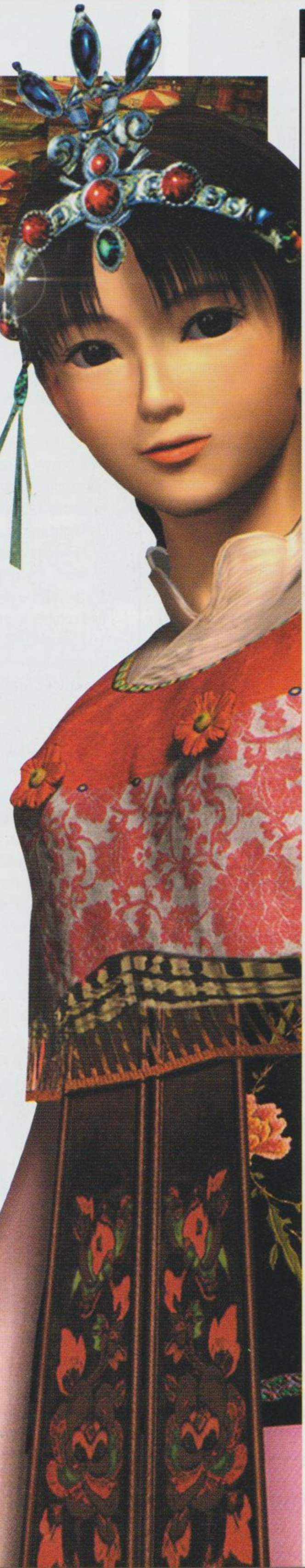
Although *Shenmue* is not being described by Suzuki as a Role Playing Game (instead, it's the first "FREE – Full Reactive Eyes Entertainment" title), the storyline and atmosphere are still two of the most important parts of the game. Very little information has been released about the plot, but it's known that the hero, Ryo Hazuki, starts his adventure in 1985 Yokosuka, Japan where his father has just been killed. On his quest to discover the truth behind his father's death, he travels around the major cities of China and Hong Kong, meeting hundreds of detailed characters on the way. To make *Shenmue* 's cities feel more lifelike, virtual people really do live in them; they each go about their daily business rather than just standing still, waiting for you to talk to them. These people have jobs, they have homes, and they have unique personalities – complete with enough



△ **Virtual people really do live in the cities.**



△ **"Ten paaand narnahs a-paaaaand!"**



phrases of speech to make them seem believably human.

"Although the programming team is huge, the scenario we're creating is 120 times bigger than a Hollywood movie", laughs Suzuki. "We record voices every day, but one day's volume of data is bigger than an entire movie. This has been going on for over a hundred days already, and we're still using the studio every day from morning to night, even now."

Because of the amount of work being done, Suzuki has had to rely on a dedicated team. "In Japan there are no unions like in the UK, so we can work three times faster. If I created at this speed abroad it would take another 300 days to release. We've had to reserve three studios and work them concurrently to finish, and that means we also need four directors."

Crumbs. So it's a big project then. But what does all of this really mean for us, the gaming public?

EPIC PROPORTIONS

What we're going to get is one of the biggest and most intricately-detailed games ever made. Suzuki recently revealed that *Shenmue* will now be released on four GD-ROMs, one of which contains the revolutionary *Shenmue* Passport.

"The passport is very focused on the Internet and user support. *Shenmue* has lots of mini-games within it – the complete *Hang-On* and *Space Harrier* arcade games, for example – and these all save data to the Visual Memory unit. The *Shenmue* Passport connects to a server which analyses your data, then updates all the best achievements day by day. It also offers help for anybody who has a problem with the quest."

Internet compatibility opens up the possibility of online trading, where you will be able to buy, sell and swap valuable in-game items with real-life players around the world. It's been confirmed that toys of favourite Sega characters such as Alex Kidd and *NiGHTS* can be found in the game, and that some of these will be extremely rare. Trading may be the only way to collect the complete set.

"The *Shenmue* Passport server is very big – even if a hundred million people access the server, it can send data to them all at the same time. We're hoping that when *Shenmue* is released in the US and UK we can get an even bigger server so that World Championships can be prepared, with Sega giving prizes to the top players", Suzuki enthuses. "It's a new type of gaming. We have never had so many people connecting in one game before – it's a new challenge."

ROYAL VARIETY

As well as being the most technically-advanced game ever (*Shenmue* was the best-looking title at the recent Tokyo Game Show, even putting Sony's upcoming PlayStation 2 to shame), *Shenmue* combines a variety of playing styles into one. A lot of the game is played from a third-person perspective, where it's possible to wander anywhere you want in a complete 3D city. Everything reacts to real time, with the sun rising and setting when it should, shops opening and closing at specific times, and the weather changing as you play – supposedly, Suzuki's team checked the real-life weather records for each area featured in the game, just to make sure the in-game weather would be accurate. These adventure sections are the most traditionally RPG-like parts of *Shenmue*, with people to talk to, puzzles to solve and items to collect.

The Quick Timer Event (QTE) sections don't sound too hot, but ▷

"IT'S ONE OF THE MOST INTRICATELY DETAILED GAMES EVER MADE"

SHENMUE GOES PUBLIC!

In an exclusive move, we took *Shenmue* to HMV in London's Oxford St for its first public showing in the UK

KURUM, OLD-SKOOL GAMER CURRENTLY PLAYING *TIBERIAN SUN*...

YEARS GAMING?
Fifteen. I've had everything!
VERDICT ON *SHENMUE*:
Very impressive! I hope that guy hurries up so I can have a go!
GONNA BUY IT?
Definitely!

MARTIN, SKIVING ON HIS LUNCHBREAK.

YEARS GAMING?
Since I got my PlayStation.
VERDICT ON *SHENMUE*:
Wow, I've never seen anything like this before. Incredible.
GONNA BUY IT?
I could be persuaded to get a Dreamcast now…

MICHAEL, A SEGA FAN FROM WAY BACK...

YEARS GAMING?
All of them!
VERDICT ON *SHENMUE*:
Not too sure about the QTE bits but it looks fantastic!
GONNA BUY IT?
Yeah, I reckon so.

CHRIS, HARDCORE GAMER WAITING FOR DREAMCAST TO IMPRESS

YEARS GAMING?
Er, a while now.
VERDICT ON *SHENMUE*:
It's very smooth and it plays well. I wish I understood Japanese!
GONNA BUY IT?
If I get a Dreamcast I'd definitely consider it.

YU MUST REMEMBER THIS

No-one in the video games industry has a back-catalogue which even comes close to rivalling Yu Suzuki's. Here are a few arcade titles of his you may remember

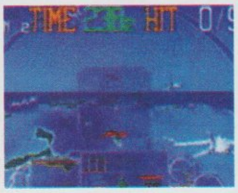
SPACE HARRIER (1985)
Holding a giant rocket under one arm, run and fly across alien worlds blasting some genuinely massive bosses.

HANG-ON (1985)
The excellent bright red plastic bike controller and the best graphics of its day made *Hang-On* a worldwide hit for Sega.

OUT RUN (1986)
Who doesn't remember this one? Race around the world in an open-top Ferrari, taking multiple routes to reach the checkpoints in time.

AFTERBURNER (1987)
Fly your jet in some high-speed dogfights and low-level bombing runs, then feel a bit sick because of the Super Scaler™ graphics and crash.

POWER DRIFT (1989)
Added hills to racing games – and lots of them. Each circuit plays like some kind of crazy roller coaster.



R-360 (1990)
Basically this is an upgraded version of *G-LOC* in a mad gyroscopic cabinet which induced actual blackouts in weak children.

VIRTUA RACING (1992)
An F1-style racer with 3D graphics which revolutionised driving games and was the first to have multiple viewpoints.

VIRTUA FIGHTER (1993)
The original 3D fighting game, and it caused a bit of a stir. Its sequels have taken one-on-one combat to new levels.

▷ having tried a number of them out for ourselves, we can tell you that they really do work. These are fast-paced action sequences which require you to react quickly to the on-screen instructions. For example, you're handcuffed to another character and you're running from a chasing gang through thin underground tunnels. Just as you sprint around a corner, there's a pipe sticking up in the middle of the path. You only get about half a second in which to react to the arrow which flashes up on-screen – if you don't press the right direction in time then the two characters run wrists-first into the pipe, letting the chasing pack get that little bit closer. The tension and sheer terror created by this style of gameplay is unique in any game, plus it also makes possible some brilliantly-choreographed action sequences and fight scenes.

As well as reaction-based QTE fights, *Shenmue* has *Virtua Fighter*-style Free Battles, where you get to use special attacks and combos to beat people up your own way. Very little has been shown of these sections, but they're expected to play similarly to Suzuki's previous fighting games. On top of these main gameplay styles, you can expect various driving sections (racing a motorbike across town at night against the clock, or competing in fork-lift truck races against workmates down the docks, for example), lots of amusement machines to play with (darts, UFO catchers, classic arcade games), and full-on paid jobs to take on.

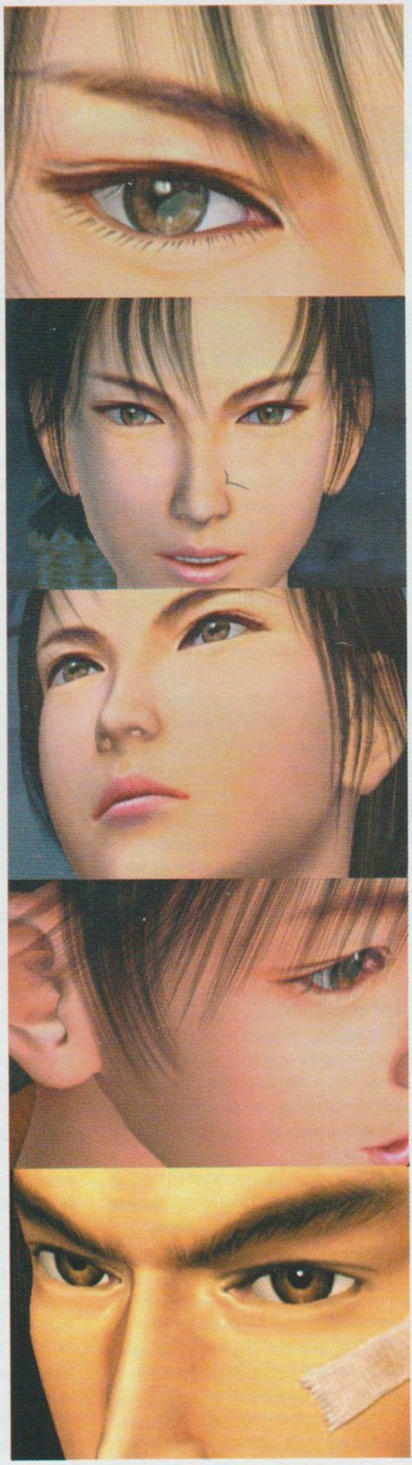
Will this game ever end?

"There is an ultimate end to the quest, but it will have a sequel. It's easy if you imagine *Star Wars*. You get to the end of a complete story with each film, but it's only part of a bigger vision", Suzuki reveals. "You know *Episode I*? Well, this game is the same as *Episode I*. I have a very big scenario for *Shenmue* – sixteen chapters in all – and this is only the first. We've just finished chapter one, and I have many ideas for the other fifteen already. It's a long story."

WHEN-MUE?

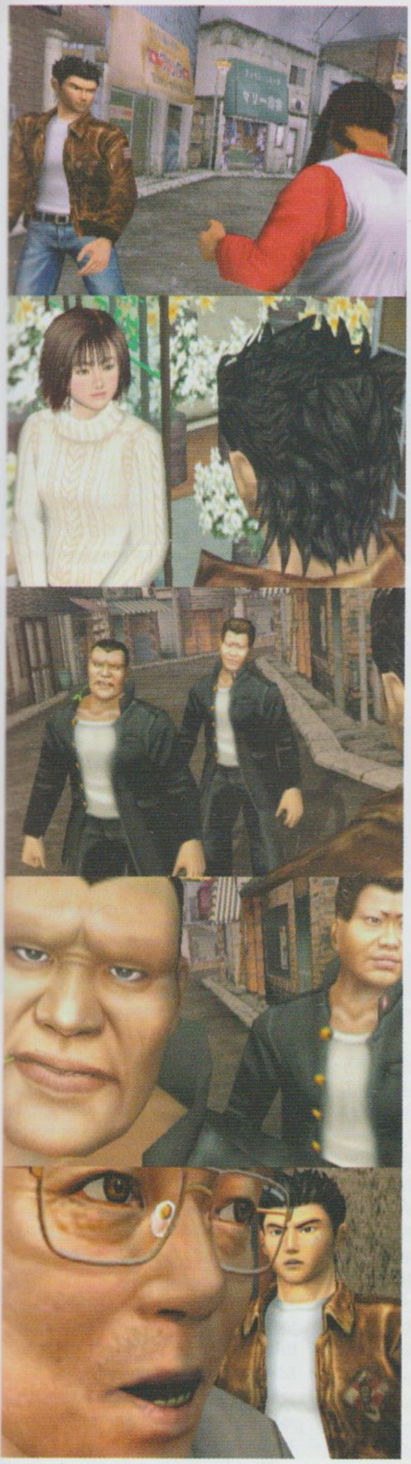
SHENMUE: YOKOSUKA was due to be released in Japan at the end of October, but it has just been announced that the title will now not come out until next spring. Sega haven't announced a UK release date yet, but you can expect to get your hands on the game in late 2000. Look forward to more exclusive details and a playable demo in *Official Dreamcast Magazine* before then. The second chapter in the *Shenmue* series should be available in Japan by next Christmas. We'll bring you details as soon as we get them.

WHAT'S SHENMUE?

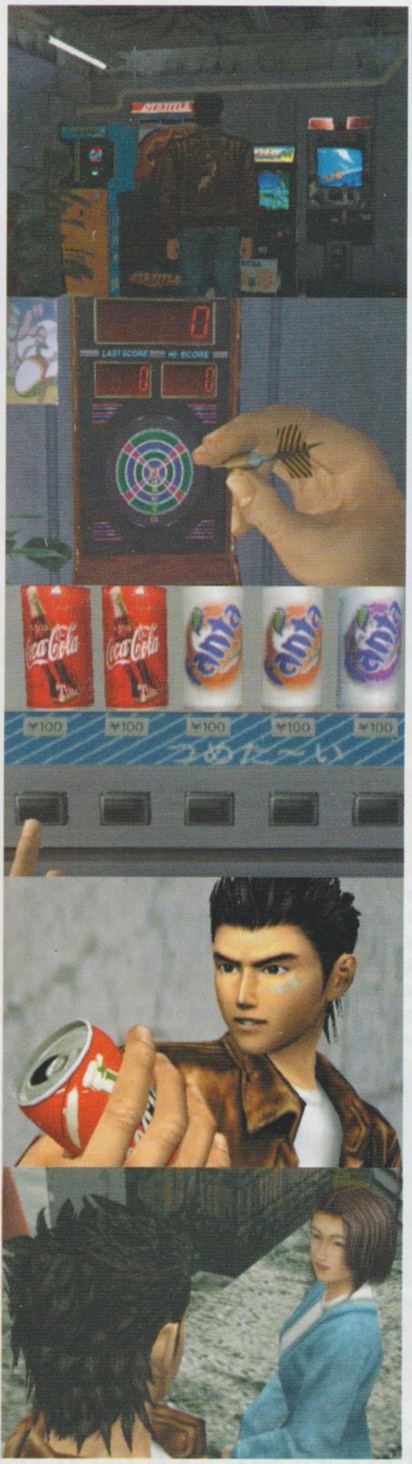


1 ▷ **The demo incorporates a talking heads sequence in which key characters recite dialogue while you rotate the camera, zoom in and alter the lighting. The effect is breathtaking and more than whets the appetite for the game itself.**

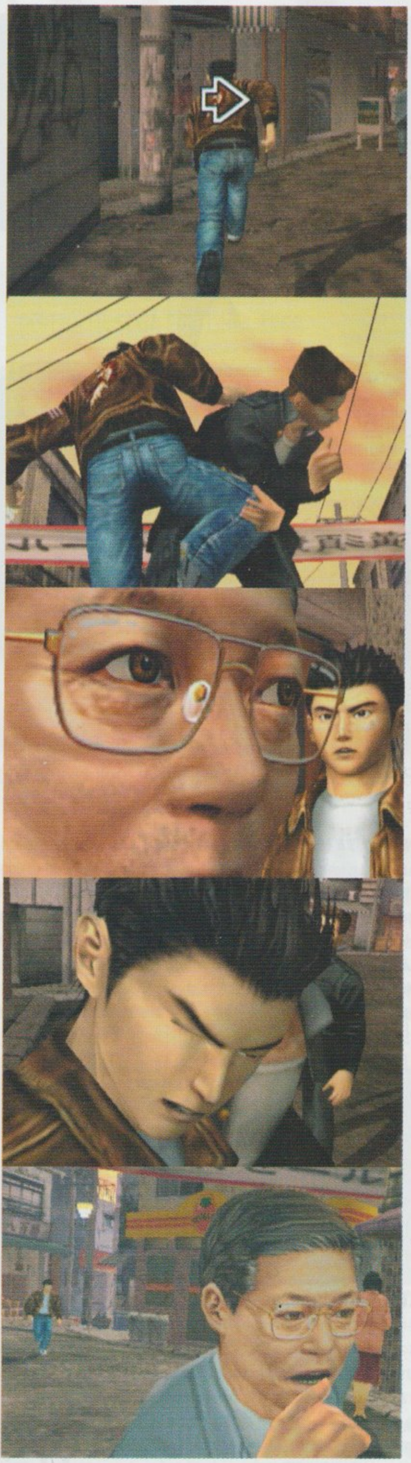
So you know about the game, but what is it actually like to play? We take a look at the exclusive Japanese demo *What's Shenmue* to find out



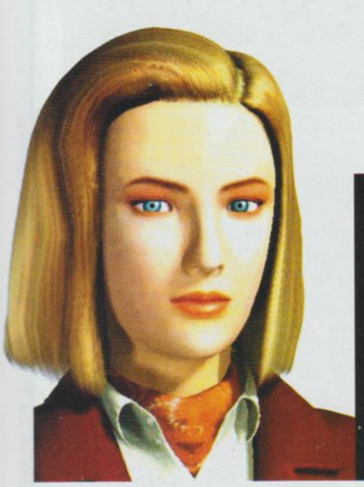
2 The mini-game on the *What's Shenmue?* disc revolves around a mission given to you by the geezer with the bad perm. A quest to find the suited Sega man ensues in which you must ask passers-by for hints and dodge the attentions of a pair of aggressive sailors.



3 *Shenmue*'s fully interactive environment is a joy to behold and better still to use. In the full game all the arcade machines will be playable, including Suzuki classics like *Hang On* and *Afterburner,* and you'll be able to understand people when you talk to them…

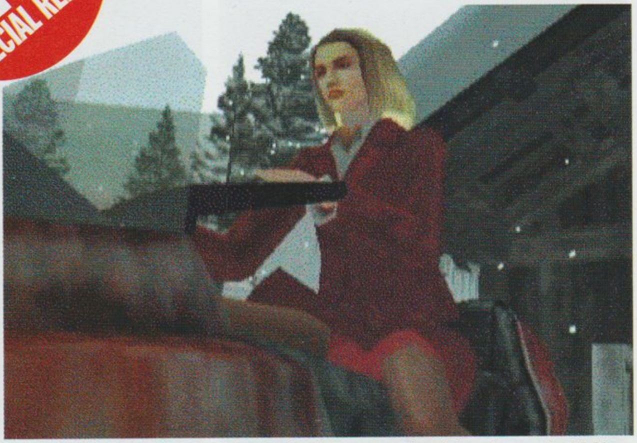


4 The 'quick time event' sequences test the reflexes and effect the outcome of the game. While the demo features two Quick Timer Events (fighting the sailors and chasing the Sega boss through the streets), the full game will contain many more, all in real time.

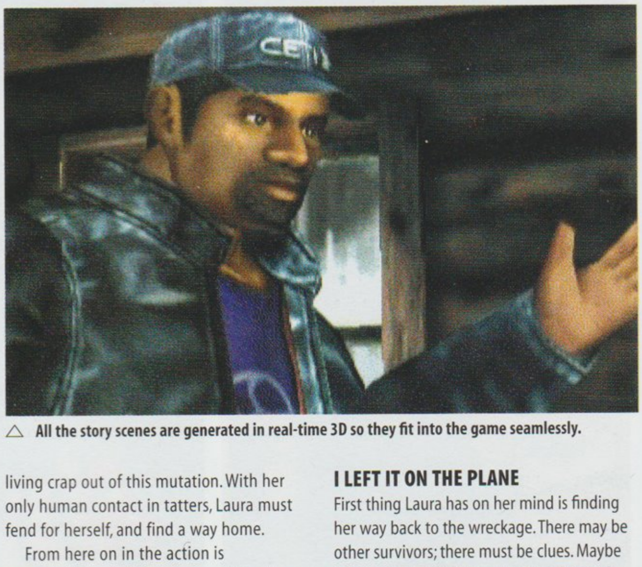


D2

Like *Shenmue*, this is a game which has been in development since long before Dreamcast even existed. Since before TV was invented, or so it feels. **JOHN KAPAR** takes a look at another epic in the making



△ Hotwire the skidoo and take it for a joyride. Then set fire to it and dump it on a school field.



△ All the story scenes are generated in real-time 3D so they fit into the game seamlessly.

KENJI ENO IS A LEGEND ON HIS HOME TURF – Japan. He's a lot more than your average games producer – he's a lot more than your average Japanese man, in fact. He's a big guy, and he's big in Japan – not just as a games developer but also as a musician, writer, and contributor to many late night talk shows about the arts.

So when Kenji Eno is asked when the hell his latest game is going to be finished, it's okay for him to answer, "Whenever it's ready. Maybe never – I don't care." We should think ourselves pretty fortunate then that *D2* is finally shipping in Japan just before Christmas this year, and is already being eyed up by a significant UK publisher.

D2 is ready, but are you ready for *D2*? This won't be easy to answer.

ACTION STATIONS

D2 isn't as straightforward as it may seem. It's an action game, but that's oversimplifying things. The main character, controlled by you, is called Laura. She's kind of like Ripley from the *Alien* movies – always at the centre of some horrific drama. *D2* is her third starring role, and it's quite different to what her fans are used to.

Laura's first game, 'D' (as in 'Dracula') was released on PlayStation a few years ago and became well-known for its eerie 'movie' sequences of Laura mooching around a haunted house, narrowly escaping death from possessed suits of armour and stuff. It was kind of cool, but the control was very limited. More like a point-and-click adventure than an action game.

Her last chiller, *EO: Enemy Zero*, took place on a disaster-stricken space station. You could also walk Laura around the station from a first-person perspective, and fight aliens *Doom*-style with a laser gun. Tasty, though still limited.

In *D2* anything is possible. Since Dreamcast can create any kind of cool situation in real-time, Laura has complete freedom to explore and survive her latest nightmare world: Alaska, Christmas 2000.

AND THEN I WOKE UP

True to form, a meteor hits an aeroplane carrying Laura. Next thing she knows, she wakes up in a tiny mountain cabin. Outside is the mother of all blizzards. Inside, the owner of the cabin soon succumbs to an alien parasite, and Laura dutifully blows the living crap out of this mutation. With her only human contact in tatters, Laura must fend for herself, and find a way home.

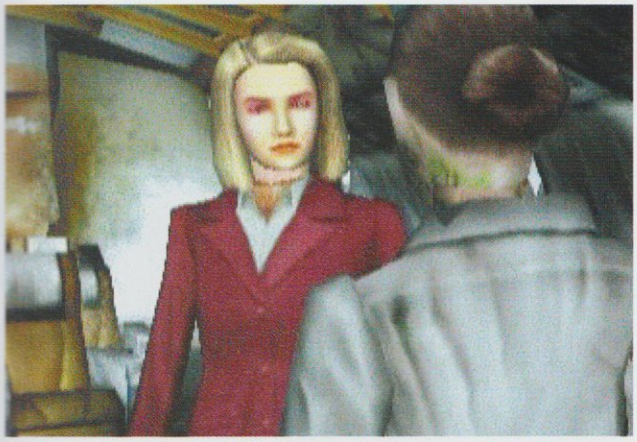
From here on in the action is respectably varied. The game retains the tense exploration feel of the original *D*, later adopted by Capcom's *Resident Evil* series. Check around the interior of the cabin for any tools that might help. Take another good look at the disease and bullet-ridden host and chuckle to your sick self. Once Laura steps outside the cabin, however, the game opens up all-new areas of gameplay.

I LEFT IT ON THE PLANE

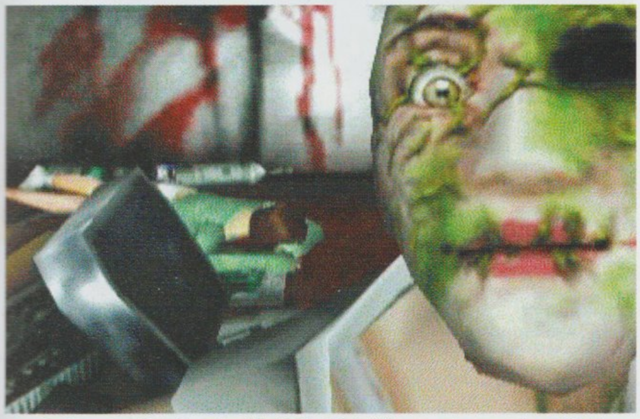
First thing Laura has on her mind is finding her way back to the wreckage. There may be other survivors; there must be clues. Maybe her copy of *Marie Claire* survived the crash too. Crunching through the snow, Laura is stopped in her tracks by more mutated humans – their asses have sprouted angel wings and their stomachs now have eyes. They also walk on their hands, which is always impressive. In order to put these poor sods out of their misery, Laura outs with her Uzi and the perspective shifts from *Tomb Raider*-style third-person, to quasi-*Quake* style first-person. Mow them down as the machine gun flashes and the crosshair finds the target.

Since the snow is very deep, and progress is slow, the discovery of a skidoo comes as no small relief. It's a lot of fun to control too, jumping over drifts, dodging trees. It gets Laura where she wants to go, fast. It also gives you a whole new playing style to master.

> "*D2* WILL BE TERROR TAKEN TO THE EXTREME, OF THAT WE'RE SURE"



△ The characters move smoothly, but the animation's a bit wooden – just like the acting.



△ "Can I get you a drink of anything? Tea? Coffee? Puke?" The stewardess must die, and fast!

GRISLY LAURA

During the initial stages of the game it appears Laura uses the cabin as a base. Though she's successful fighting off the mutants, she is easily exhausted and must rest. She needs more energy too, so must hunt for food. Hunting is another quirky gameplay addition, and it requires you to steady Laura's aim while peering through the sites of a rifle. If you're successful dropping a moose, you get some meat to take home.

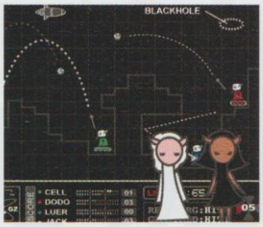
Eventually you get used to dropping mutants without too much damage inflicted on Laura, and the skidoo finally gets her to the wreckage. There's one survivor – an air stewardess. Only her face is covered in green gunk, and one of her eyeballs is hanging out.

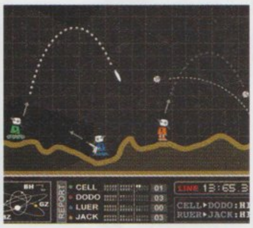
Of course the poor stewardess is going the same way as the guy back at the cabin, only she's got the condition a whole lot worse. It's a whole lot worse for Laura too. The scene that ensues is kind of like the first End Of Level Boss encounter in old-skool titles, albeit with more rotating heads, spurting vomit, and gloopy tendrils than all the *Mario Brothers* games put together. A tentacle that rips out of the stewardess's body wraps around Laura's waist, and picks her off the ground. It's back to the first-person view to pepper the monster with bullets. Meantime Laura is being shaken about like a pair of maracas. Mad as hell.

So it begins, and so we have to wait until December 23 for the Japanese version to finally be released. There's no doubt that *D2* will be some kind of masterpiece, respected for the sum of its parts, if not for the outstanding quality of each individual game style it contains. Think of it this way: if this were *Resident Evil: Code Veronica* everyone would be falling over themselves to proclaim it a work of genius. *D2* will be terror taken to the extreme, we're certain of that, and a fine mystery too.

DEVELOPER: **WARP**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

HOT FROM JAPAN シェンムー

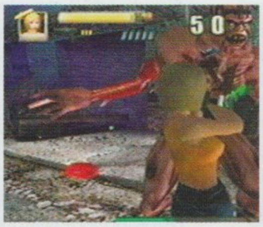


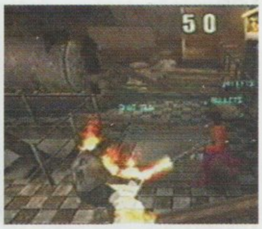


DEE DEE PLANET

DEVELOPER: **SEGA** PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

This simple four-player action game is very similar to *Death Tank*, the brilliant bonus game hidden within the Saturn version of *Duke Nukem 3D*. Controlling a tiny vehicle, you move left and right across randomly generated terrains, using bought weapons to wipe out one another. It's a bit like *Worms*, only with everything going on at once instead of being turn-based. Designed specifically for Internet play, *Dee Dee Planet* will be released at a budget price in Japan before Christmas.

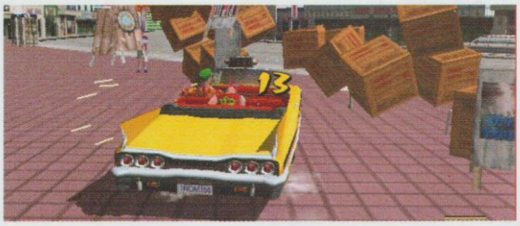




ZOMBIE REVENGE

DEVELOPER: **AM1** PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

A spin-off from the *House Of The Dead* games, *Zombie Revenge* is a non-stop horror action game which is currently in arcades all over the country. The Dreamcast version is spot-on, featuring all the fighting moves and weapons which make the arcade game so much fun to play. Only the first small part was playable when we saw it, so we haven't seen any Dreamcast-exclusive goodies yet, but we're hoping for lots of new game modes and levels. Expect *Zombie Revenge* early next year.



CRAZY TAXI

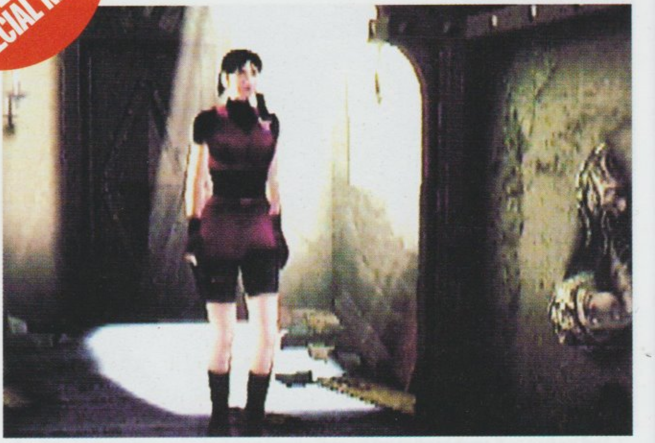
DEVELOPER: **AM3** PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

We've featured the arcade version on page 28, but an early Dreamcast translation was playable at the Tokyo Game Show. Unsurprisingly, the graphics are identical to the arcade game, and the cars are just as much fun to drive as always. Sega have promised new cities to race around for the home version, featuring more tight corners to challenge even *Crazy Taxi* experts. We recommend you get some practice in down the arcade before it's released on Dreamcast early next year.

LIVE & DIRECT FROM
JAPAN
SPECIAL REPORT

RESIDENT EVIL CODE:VERONICA

It's not easy being queasy. **JOHN KAPAR** does his best to face the new, fantastically-detailed episode in the *Resident Evil* saga



THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, the more they stay the same: *Code Veronica* joins *Soul Calibur* as a Dreamcast game that doesn't do things so differently, just so much better.

You know there are groaning zombies, you know there are big guns, you know there is bad acting, and you know there are gruesome shocks all the way through. You know there are still the doors that open slowly, and those stairs that are climbed at a snail's pace – maybe someone decided these are part of what makes *Resident Evil* so damned tense – but you've never seen them done quite like this before.

THE UNFORGIVEN

Before launching into the praise that you know is coming, we owe it to you to let you know how upsetting some elements are in *Code Veronica*. The *Resident Evil* games' legacy of bizarre walking habits, and rigid gun-firing posture has succeeded in reaching even this far up the technology scale. Survival Horror is it? Maybe they're talking about the horrors that survive with each update.

THE FORGIVEN

Onto the glory of this essential title, then – first of all, the locations. *Code Veronica* combines real time 3D scenery with the usual static environments to bring a new experience. You now get a real sense of place as Claire Redfield climbs fire escapes, or enters a room of gigantic proportions. In a graveyard you can see all sides of the stones as Claire treads carefully around. The 3D, polygonal sets make quite a difference. You find yourself marvelling at the locations, as well as the monsters.

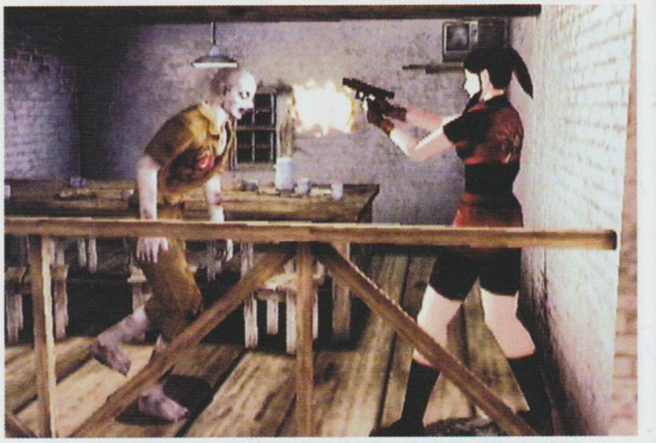
Most of the time the old tricks that make the *Resident Evil* games so popular are here once more, spruced up Dreamcast-style to make us all feel very happy about life. Expect lots of blind corners, basically, to keep your nerves like piano wire. Perspective is used more effectively than ever in *Code Veronica*. It's one of the advantages of a high-resolution display that you can show characters from a distance, and still see them clearly. In close-up the new ghouls look astounding too. One room in particular makes you jump, only because the first thing that fills the screen as you enter is a zombie's profile in all its grotesque detail. Claire is obscured from view while the zombie walks by.

BETTER WITH THE LIGHTS OUT

Even when they're down the zombies stay horrible. Though you may have shot them to the ground, they lie there twitching. As they walk along, their zombie jaws gyrate sickeningly. In fact all the ghouls, large or small, are more disgusting and play on phobias more since they're so sharply defined and animated so well.

As Claire walks down a tunnel with only her Zippo to light the way, bats flapping around her head look a whole lot better than the blocky versions on PlayStation. In well-lit areas the skin of mutated citizens glistens, and you can see every contour of their horrid bodies. You're reaching for your gun before you even make that conscious decision. These enemies look so great they have to die.

It's a shame that aiming and firing is handled the same old *Resident Evil* way in *Code Veronica*. Not even the analogue controller offers total precision at the moment. In fact we found the analogue to be a little jumpy compared to the digital d-pad. The controls work the same as ever in battle: one button to arm yourself and another to fire. Then 'boom', 'schlick', 'woosh', or whatever noise you prefer – let your weapon do the talking.



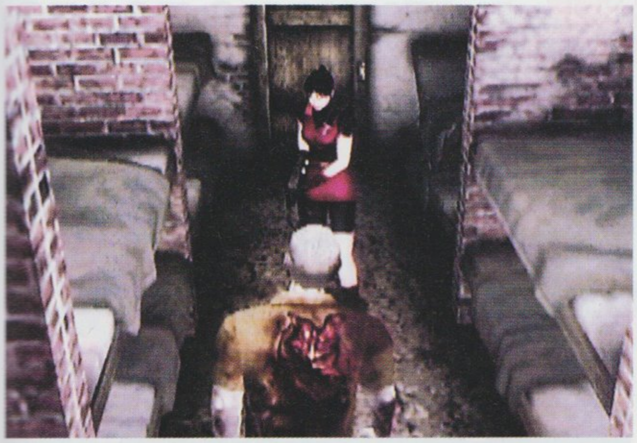
△ **The lamp on the ceiling swings about, lighting the zombie's weeping sores beautifully.**

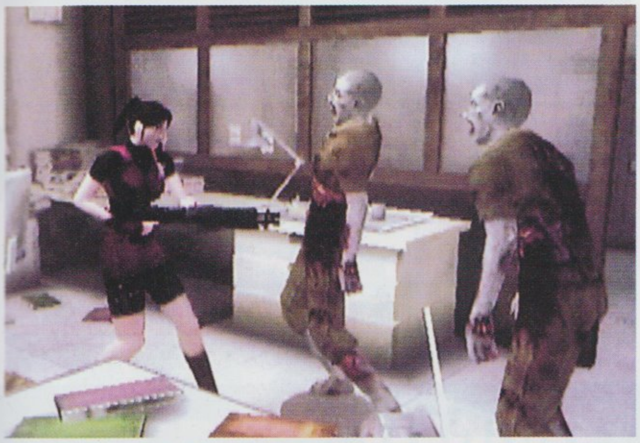
SCHLOCKING STUFF

We're hoping that the puzzles in *Code Veronica* are trickier than those in the PlayStation *Resident Evil* titles. One of those in the Tokyo Game Show demo simply required you to extinguish a fire to locate an emblem that would open a door. Elsewhere metal crates were pushed together to form bridges over burning metal walkways. Nothing astounding.

As for shocks, we encountered stuff like a zombie smashing through a window as Claire walked by. You could see the guy beforehand, so it wasn't so scary after all – you know *Res Evil*; you know this had to happen. One cooler bit saw a distraught human locked in a room screaming for help at a window, before having his head slammed into the thick glass by some unseen monster. Naturally, the head popped in a gross spray of blood, leaving red smears up the window. Unsurprisingly perhaps, a few people looked genuinely disturbed after trying the early version of *Code Veronica* out for themselves at the Tokyo Game Show.

"NATURALLY, THE HEAD POPPED IN A GROSS SPRAY OF BLOOD, LEAVING RED SMEARS UP THE WINDOW"



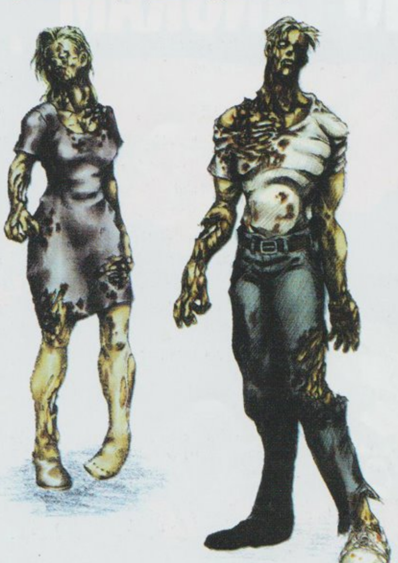


△ **You can imagine the kind of mess this is going to make when you pull the trigger. Yummy!**

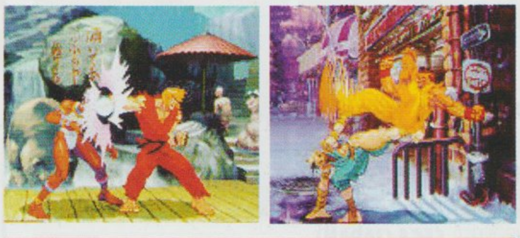
So technically there is no doubt that this will draw your attention. With its spooky lighting and subtle use of colour, the locations surely drag you in. What people are most looking for, especially the fans, is an epic adventure here. Thankfully, Capcom have confirmed that *Code Veronica* will be at least three times the size of the PlayStation's forthcoming game, *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*.

A new *Resident Evil* game is always going to be something to look forward to. There are enough die hard fans out there who will absolutely need a Dreamcast to play this game, and anyone new to games will be thankful their first *Resident Evil* is presented with superior visuals and sound effects. One last warning before you go: Capcom knows Dreamcast is selling to a mature audience. Don't expect anything nasty to be held back.

DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**



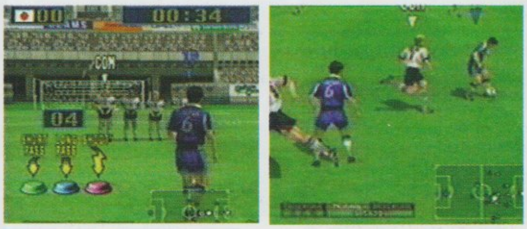
△ **That's you, that is. You and your boyfriend.**



STREET FIGHTER III: W-IMPACT

DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**

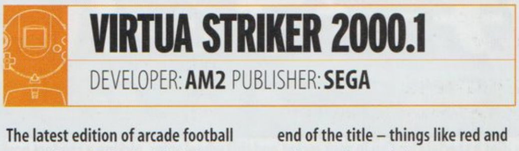
Capcom's classic *Street Fighter* series is still going strong in the arcades, and Dreamcast is the first console to get a game from the new *Street Fighter III* range. Called *W-Impact*, it's a combination of the original *SFIII* and the *2nd Impact* update, giving you more characters to play around with as well as extra moves. Unfortunately it doesn't look as though the latest update, *3rd Strike*, will be featured – a particular shame because Chun-Li returns in it. Still, expect a fantastic arcade-perfect conversion.



VIRTUA STRIKER 2000.1

DEVELOPER: **AM2** PUBLISHER: **SEGA**

The latest edition of arcade football game *Virtua Striker* is definitely coming to Dreamcast, and it's going to be a spot-on conversion. Plenty of new features are being added before the game's Christmas release in Japan, as indicated by the '.1' at the end of the title – things like red and yellow cards, two halves per game, and matches which last more than three minutes. Though the current game works well in the arcade, a home footie title needs a lot more. Should be big in the UK next spring.



THE TYPING OF THE DEAD

DEVELOPER: **AM1** PUBLISHER: **SEGA (JAPAN)**

A very unusual game due for release both in arcades and on Dreamcast. Basically it's *House Of The Dead 2*, only you use a keyboard to kill the zombies by typing the word floating in front of them as quickly as possible. The little green maggots only require a single button press, but to beat the bosses you must type in a series of long words. Not the most amazing game ever made, but we'd certainly rather be taught to type by a load of zombies than by Mavis bloody Beacon.

LIVE & DIRECT FROM JAPAN SPECIAL REPORT

CHU-CHU ROCKET

DEVELOPER: **SONIC TEAM**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA (JAPAN)**

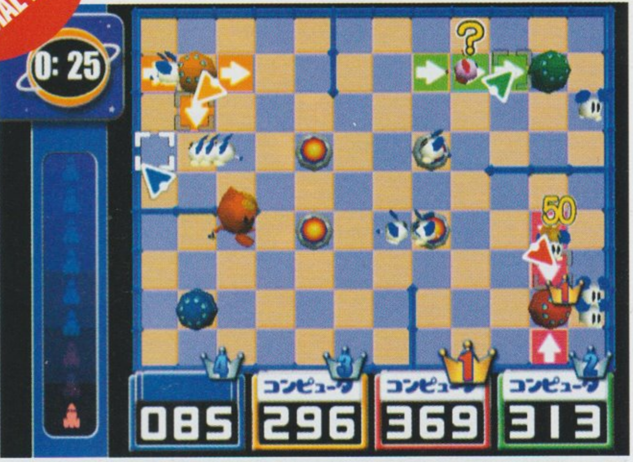
AFTER THE SPECTACULAR *Sonic Adventure*, it's a surprise to find that Sonic Team have gone on to produce a simple-looking multiplayer puzzle game. But having played *Chu-Chu Rocket* and become completely addicted, we can tell you that it's one of the best of its kind.

The concept is an easy one to grasp: little mouse-like Chu-Chus pop out of holes and run in straight lines until they hit arrows which you've placed on the floor, whereby they turn and run in a different direction. The idea is to place these arrows so that more Chu-Chus end up in your rocket than in of the other players'. So far, so simple.

Occasionally a big orange cat turns up. These guys are quicker than the Chu-Chus, but follow arrows in exactly the same way. Whatever you do you must keep these cats away from your rocket – if one gets in, it'll take out the majority of your Chu-Chus, causing big problems. As such, when one of these cats appears the game goes crazy as you frantically destroy their arrow paths in a desperate bid to force the evil cat into an opponent's rocket.

The great balance of this game is what makes it so exciting to play – everything you do has a positive *and* negative effect – plus it's got to be the fastest-moving puzzle game ever made.

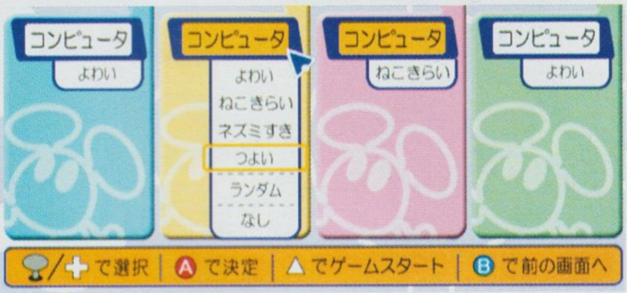
Chu-Chu Rocket is being released in Japan in December for only £25, including a lovely new translucent red Dreamcast joypad! Though there are no definite plans to bring the game to the UK yet, we reckon it could be a massive online gaming hit if it could be released at a similar budget price over here.



△ Move your coloured pointer around and press the four buttons to place arrows. Brilliant stuff!

チューフィーバー!!
ねこフィーバー!!

△ Get a special Chu-Chu in your rocket and this wheel spins, picking a random power-up.



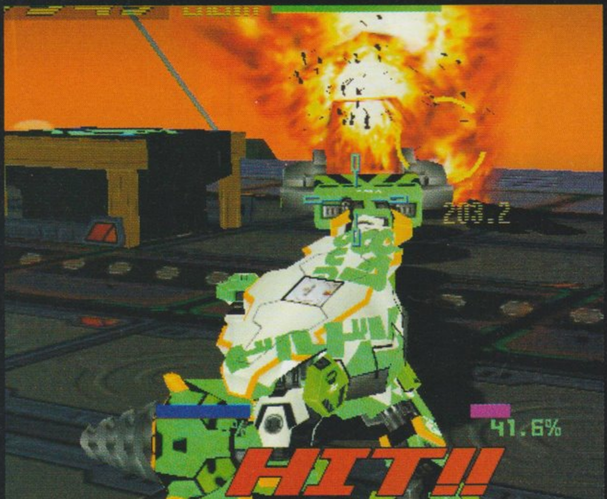
△ Don't ignore *Chu-Chu Rocket*. It may look simple, but it's one of the most intense games ever.

VIRTUAL ON: ORATORIO TANGRAM

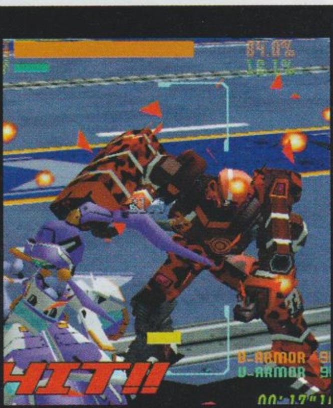
DEVELOPER: **AM3**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA (JAPAN)**

EVEN THOUGH IT takes two Model 3 boards to run this game in an arcade, a souped-up Dreamcast conversion is on its way. The series of one-on-one robot battle games is enormous in Japan, but has never taken off in the same way over here. As such, Sega haven't yet confirmed a UK release for *Oratorio Tangram*.

Using the specially designed twin-stick controller, it's possible to access a surprising number of moves – the amount of strategy involved in battles between expert players is incredible. The two-player mode is the only way worth playing in the arcade, and the Dreamcast version enables split-screen games on a single console or link-up over the Internet. Hardcore fans will go crazy for this conversion, but its lack of mainstream appeal means a full UK release isn't guaranteed. At least, not yet.



△ See how the robots have Dreamcast consoles built into the backs of their armour?



△ Get close for a bit of hand-to-hand combat.

△ You must master control of your Virtuaroid.

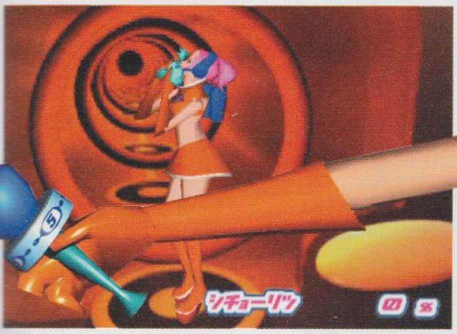
SPACE CHANNEL 5

DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA (JAPAN)**

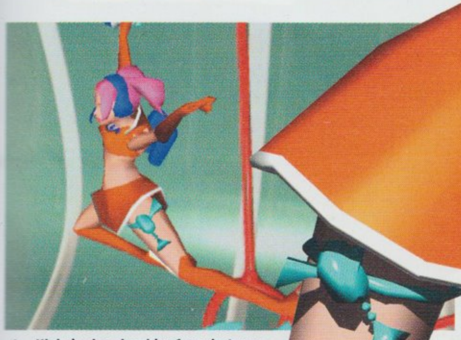
TETSUYA MIZUGUCHI, the original creator of *Sega Rally*, has spent the last few years working on this new music and dance game, and it proved to be a massive hit at the Tokyo Game Show.

The game stars a girl called Ulala, a TV reporter working for Space Channel 5 in the distant future. Investigating an alien invasion, she discovers that to save the world she must dance the aliens into submission.

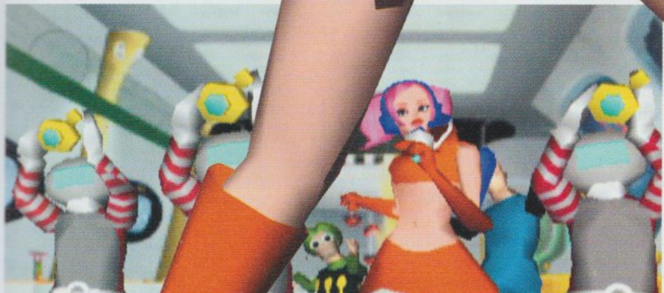
Similar to *Parappa The Rapper* on PlayStation, the aliens call out directions and buttons, and you've got to tap out the sequences in time with the music to pull off the right moves. With a great graphic style and some funky futuristic-retro pop tunes, this is going to be absolutely enormous in Japan when it's released in December.



△ **You get to dance in all kinds of weird space-age locations.**

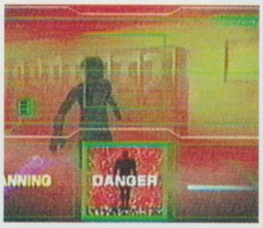


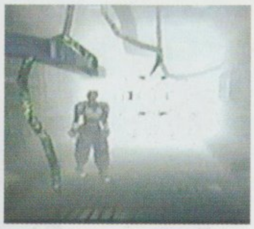
△ **Ulala is already a bit of star in Japan.**



△ **Rescued humans dance along with Ulala.**

HOT FROM JAPAN シェンムー



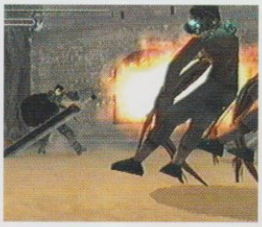


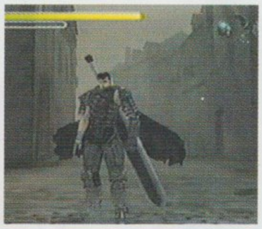
CARRIER

DEVELOPER: **JALECO** PUBLISHER: **JALECO**

In the near future, a massive ship carrying a mysterious life form has crashed on an island somewhere in the Pacific, and it's up to you and a crack team to investigate. Sounds cool, but ever so slightly familiar.

Carrier is an action adventure game with loads of disgusting mutants, shocks, guns and blood – there's also a cool gadget to scan people to find out whether they're good or bad before you wipe them out. It's looking smart, but there's still a long way to go before it's finished.



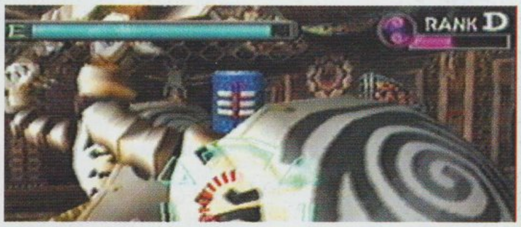


BERSERK

DEVELOPER: **YUKES** PUBLISHER: **ASCII**

An intense wandering slasher game starring you with a massive sword. A bit like *Golden Axe*, you wander around 3D landscapes hacking crowds of enemies to bits, sending blood spilling everywhere. The more you get beaten up, the more angry your character gets, until he goes completely Berserk – his eyes glow red, the whole level darkens, and everything gets a little crazy.

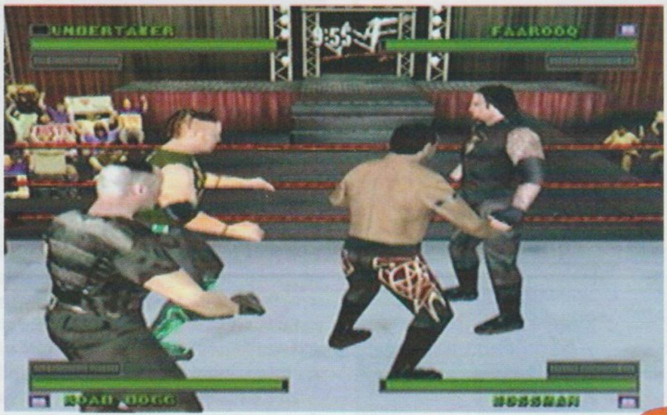
The game is due for release in Japan soon, and we'll keep you updated about any UK developments.



MAKEN X

DEVELOPER: **ATLUS** PUBLISHER: **ATLUS**

A *Quake*-style first-person action game where the main weapon is a big sword with the tip missing. As well as featuring some excellent weird characters, *Maken X* uses a cool battle system where you lock onto single enemies and can jump around while still facing them. Though the graphics are smooth, there's not a lot of detail, and the sections we've played weren't particularly exciting – especially worrying because the game is due for a Japanese release in November.



△ *WWF Attitude:* as much fun as it looks?

SECONDS OU

With the extraordinary popularity in Europe of American wrestling, Acclaim are clearly hoping for big things with *WWF Attitude*. **STEVE OWEN** pins down four readers for their first impressions of the game

THERE'S BEEN A FLURRY of wrestling games on the other consoles over the last couple of years. It might be the WWF or WCW licence, but to the uninformed they can all look much the same.

Clearly Dreamcast needs a wrestling game, and Acclaim's *WWF Attitude* has got a nice ring to it (sorry). If, like us, your experience of wrestling involves hazy memories of watching Big Daddy body-checking some masked weirdo who has since made ends meet by turning up as the gimp in *Pulp Fiction*, you might appreciate the knowledge of those who know. Gone are the girly leotards and Shirley Crabtree (Big Daddy to his bank manager). Today's wrestling is American, exceedingly well-paid, shockingly violent, and just as choreographed as the best of ITV's 'fights' ever used to be. It's now a mini-soap opera, with The Undertaker hating Hart, who despises HHH. Or something. (Please don't write in if we haven't got the relationships exactly right.)

Suffice to say there's an obsessive following for wrestling, and we found the right four people to put Acclaim's big hope through its paces for a few rounds.

MATTHEW SHERWIN ▷

AGE: 20

OCCUPATION: television production trainee

FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Resident Evil* on PlayStation – I prefer the original's storyline"

MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "*Resident Evil: Code Veronica*. It's just my kind of game. Sorry."

Reebok
ATHLETIC

T

SEAN NORTHCOTT

AGE: 18
OCCUPATION: hospitality assistant.
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Final Fantasy VII* on PlayStation. I have to agree with Ben here."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "*Resident Evil: Code Veronica*. If you'd asked me first it wouldn't look like I copied everyone else." ▷

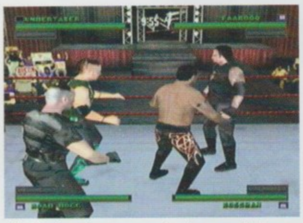
JOHN ALTON

AGE: 18
OCCUPATION: graphic designer
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Half-Life* on PC. It's just so scary"
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "*Parasite Eve 2.* We could probably all survive with games only from Square." ▷

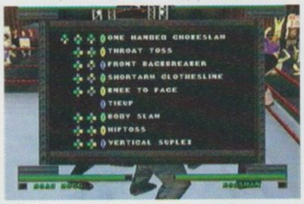
BEN BARRY ▷

AGE: 19
OCCUPATION: student
FAVOURITE GAME OF ALL TIME: "*Final Fantasy VII* on PlayStation – clearly the finest game ever created."
MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO: "*Shenmue* and *Perfect Dark*."

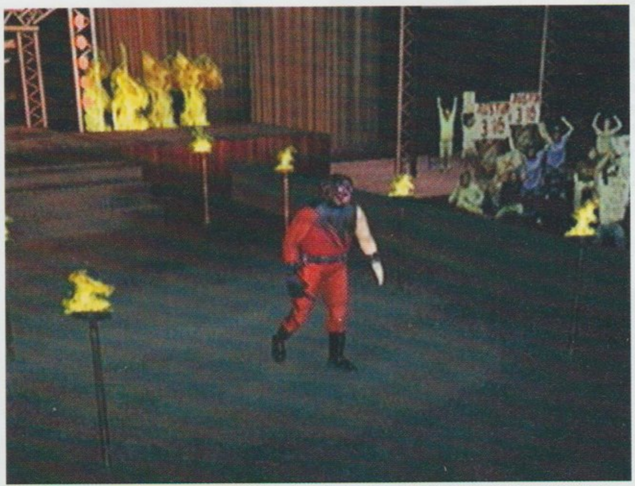
PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY



△ **Undertaker, appropriately enough, has a deathwish as he takes on three at once.**



△ **At first you'll keep pausing to check out the controls for each of the moves.**



△ **All the pomp and ceremony of WWF is included – each wrestler has his own entrance theme tune and stage show.**

THE PRE-FIGHT ARGUMENT

As is a tradition in wrestling, you've got to get the fighters and audience warmed up with a bit of friendly banter. Each wrestler is given a microphone and a chance to taunt the other into a salivating frenzy, with a nation of WWF fans reaching for their credit cards for the Pay Per View match that's soon to be.

We work our four guys into a similar frenzy by forcing them to create their own wrestler before fighting, using *Attitude*'s surprisingly flexible editor. You can choose everything from the body type, to the eyes, to their tattoo, and it's surprisingly funny.

Matt suggests that Sean tries to create himself. Sean, however, is having none of it: "No, not with that buff body. Who are you trying to kid?"

"I was trying to make Jackie Chan on PlayStation," Ben informs the group, "but they don't have the hair. I was really quite upset. i had the clothes and the face just right, but I couldn't get the hair."

Sean's beef is that "you can't create your own signature moves".

A thoughtful Matt is less convinced: "Well, how would you do it?"

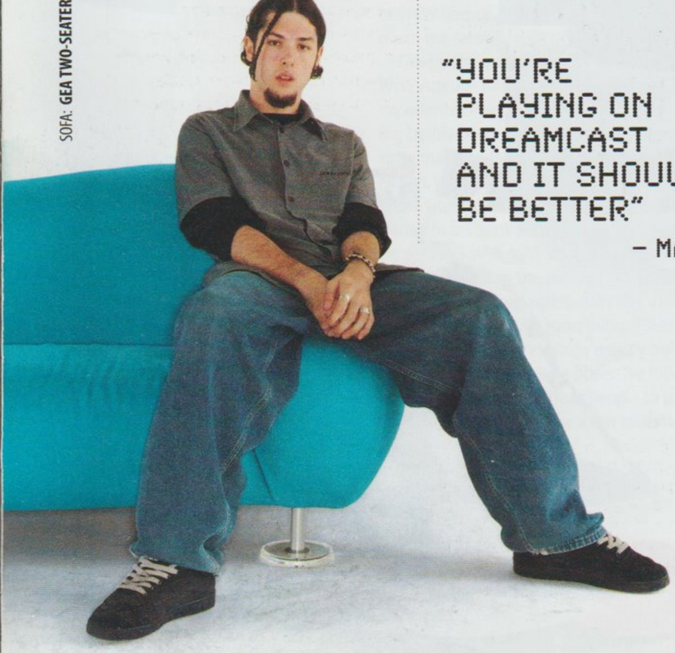
"I don't know," is Sean's curt reply.

Somewhat more helpfully, John points out that "you can take other people's signature moves and then change the controls to access them."

"I suppose that's about as good as you can expect," Sean concedes somewhat reluctantly.

"YOU'RE PLAYING ON DREAMCAST AND IT SHOULD BE BETTER"

– MATT



SOFA: GEA TWO-SEATER, PURVES & PURVES (£2,250)

THE ENTRANCE

With WWF, it always seems as if the fight will never start. After the posturing to the camera there's the poncing to the ring: theme tunes, fireworks, flaming torches, boos, hisses and cheers, a waving crowd, a swagger to the ring then an elaborate leap over the ropes. It's all part of the showmanship of American wrestling.

Sure enough, *WWF Attitude* has recreated the whole razzmatazz of the television show, with each of the wrestlers making their entrance to a different theme tune.

Matt is visibly taken with the animation: "When they enter, it's really impressive," he enthuses. "They've all got their different walks."

Ever the fault-finder, Sean complains that "they're supposed to come down through the crowd, but there are only three lines of audience. Surely Acclaim could have had a bigger crowd."

Meanwhile, Ben has picked his favourite character: "Let's see what this wrestler's intro is like. On the PlayStation the fire was rubbish… " When not much happens in the way of an intro for his fighter, Ben rounds on the others: "Why didn't we get the intro then?" he snaps moodily. "You haven't turned intros off, have you?"

John looks sheepish. "Um, I think it was me. I was playing with the controller again."

He's ever so friendly, is Ben. "Leave it alone or I'll throw you off the balcony," he blasts back at John. Blimey, they're getting wrestling obsessed…

After a restart, they see the intro and Ben seems less concerned with balconies and testing gravity, and more taken by what's on screen. Clearly, some pretty flames have calmed him down somewhat: "Ah, there we go, that's much better than the PlayStation. There's not much in the way of animation, but the flames look really nice."

THE FIGHT

Finally, the four of them spend about 90 minutes experimenting with one-on-one, tag team against the machine and against each other, and starting on a championship. Getting stuck into some nosebag, *ODM* leaves them to it.

Three Super Deep Pan pizzas and a couple of Stellas down, and it's time for some work. While we've been knocking back the food, our game-testing chaps have been trying to knock lumps out of each other (on-screen, of course)

"Some of it seems quite recent and other bits out of date," claims Sean, a self-confessed WWF fan. "Here I'm playing Triple-H, but he used to be called DX; I've been thrown out of the ring, and the audience is chanting 'DX'. That doesn't make a lot of sense."

Ben agrees with the problem of 'inconsistencies': "And one of the wrestlers died this summer and he's still in *WWF Attitude*."

"THEY COULD HAVE PUT MORE DETAIL INTO THE WRESTLERS"

– BEN

John has now joined in the complaint about the lack of licence and realism: "Most of them are dressed differently this year," he moans, "and some of these wrestlers don't even fight any more."

Going against the prevailing opinion, Matt is actually impressed by this feature. "You can leave the ring and fight among the crowd, which is a nice touch" he maintains, before admitting that he "can't figure out how to get back in again."

THE WARM DOWN

After our readers have spent a couple of hours fighting, *ODM* tries to calm them all down with a spot of Dreamcast fishing, the less than piping hot remains of the pizza, and by sticking a microphone in their faces. "Conclusions?" we demand.

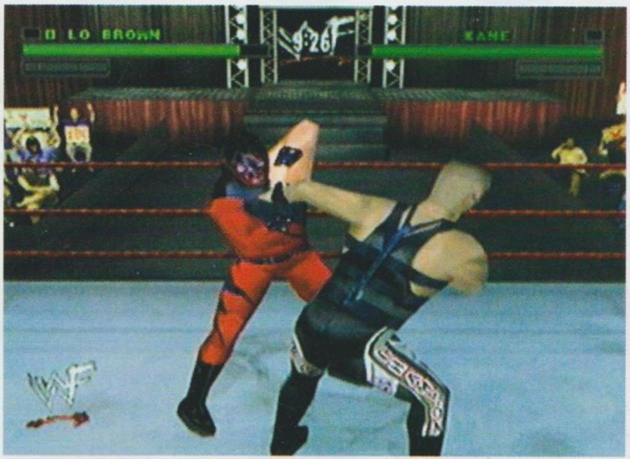
"You need to experiment with the different wrestlers to see which one matches your style," reckons John. "There's a hell of a lot of them."

Ben: "But they could have put more detail into the wrestlers. Look at the detail of the characters in *Soul Calibur*, for instance."

Matt agrees: "I think the problem with this game is that it is playable, it's a good game, but you can't shake from your head the idea that you're playing on Dreamcast and it should be better. It can do a lot better than this."

John concedes that it's good on multiplayer, although "you've got to have a base interest in it in the first place. You couldn't just pick it up, like *Sonic*. You'd have to be into wrestling. I mean, it's not *Tekken*, is it?"

Sean is less impressed: "It seems like sloppy programming. They've just taken the older versions, perhaps listened to a few criticisms, and copied it straight across."



△ **Experiment with different wrestlers to see which one matches your fighting style.**

> "SOME OF THESE WRESTLERS DON'T EVEN FIGHT ANY MORE"
> – JOHN

"Perhaps the game could develop its own storyline," offers Matt. "Not necessarily downloading updates from the Internet, but bring more of the story into the game."

ODM suggests that the important aspects of WWF are the stories and the characters, rather than the actual fighting.

"Here's an interesting statistic for you," offers Sean. "On average, a WWF programme has 37 minutes of wrestling in two hours of the show."

When taking the above comments into account, let's not forget that this is an unfinished version of *WWF Attitude*. Released in November, expect to see a review of the game in next month's *ODM*, on sale Thursday 11 November.

> "YOU CAN'T CREATE YOUR OWN SIGNATURE MOVES"
> – SEAN

RIGHT TO REPLY

We gave the development team at Acclaim a chance to respond

"With reference to the accuracy of the wrestlers in the games, there are reasons why some things stay in and some things are altered to keep up with changes within the WWF. At the end of the day we believe the experience is faithful to the WWF and the best wrestling game available on any system. As for the crowd chanting 'DX' when he's now called Triple-H, at many live events you actually hear them shouting 'DX'. It still seems to be the name they're most familiar with – and it's easier to shout!

"With regard to leaving Owen Hart in despite his death, a decision was made to keep him in for sentimental reasons and to honour his memory.

"We think the comparisons with games like *Soul Calibur*, *Sonic* and *Ready 2 Rumble* are a little unfair. Different games, different experiences. We provide grapple fans with 55 wrestlers. Each one has different moves, styles and attributes, and we let gamers create their own wrestlers. If you and a few mates want a brilliant post-pub game, then *WWF Attitude* is the business!

"We like the idea of the story angle, but it won't make it in this version. We're not sure whether most players would skip the story in favour of action. You'd have to be careful not to make stories dull and just a filler between the action. Background stuff, cut-away stories and banter might work well though.

"Incidentally, the Dreamcast version hasn't just been 'copied across' from the other platforms. It was created for Dreamcast and has been in development as long as other console versions. They share some resources, but wherever possible things have been upgraded for Dreamcast."

• Next issue, four different readers will be playing another unfinished game, and making comments and suggesting improvements to a nervous developer. If you'd like to participate, write to ***Four Play, ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ,*** *or email us at* **Letters@dreamcastmag. co.uk** *with* ***'Four Play'*** *in the subject line.*

WIN A DREAMCAST &

WORM YOUR WAY TO BIG-SCREEN GAMING!

Enjoy multiplayer *Worms Armageddon* madness in magnificent widescreen detail for only the price of a stamp!!

UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN living under a particularly remote rock, *Worms* should need no introduction, and the latest incarnation of the game on Dreamcast brings new levels of inter-worm violence and surreal special weapons. Expect to see a host of new and deadly weapons such as aqua sheep, earthquakes and mole bombs, in addition to old favourites like banana bombs.

A multiplayer game par excellence, the best way to enjoy *Worms* is on a huge telly with a big gang of mates and plenty of beer. Relying as it does on pure aggression and a fair amount of luck, there's no need to worry that a lack of lightning reflexes and expert button-pushing will prevent you from winning the day, thus it's the ideal party game.

Enter our free competition and you could be the toast of the town as, thanks to those nice people at Hasbro Interactive, we've got two Dreamcasts to give away, each complete with four controllers plus a copy of *Worms Armageddon*.

Now, while that's all very well, you don't want to be squinting at your 14-inch portable during your *Worms* epic, do you? No, you'll need something a little more substantial. So as well as the consoles and games, two lucky winners will have to make space in their living rooms for a fantastic Sony widescreen TV that we're going to give them as well! With this 32-inch monster, you'll be able to revel in the destruction you've meted out on your opponent's hapless worms in glorious detail and NICAM sound. Cool, or what?

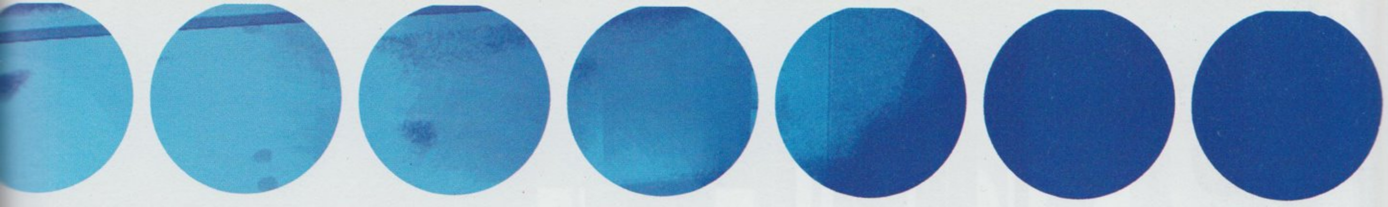
Ten runners up will each receive a copy of *Worms Armageddon*, the game that's shaping up to be the latest success story in the long and revered tradition of worm combat.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these fantastic prizes, all you have to do is answer the following simple question and send it in to us, along with all the other information requested, at the address below. So get to it.

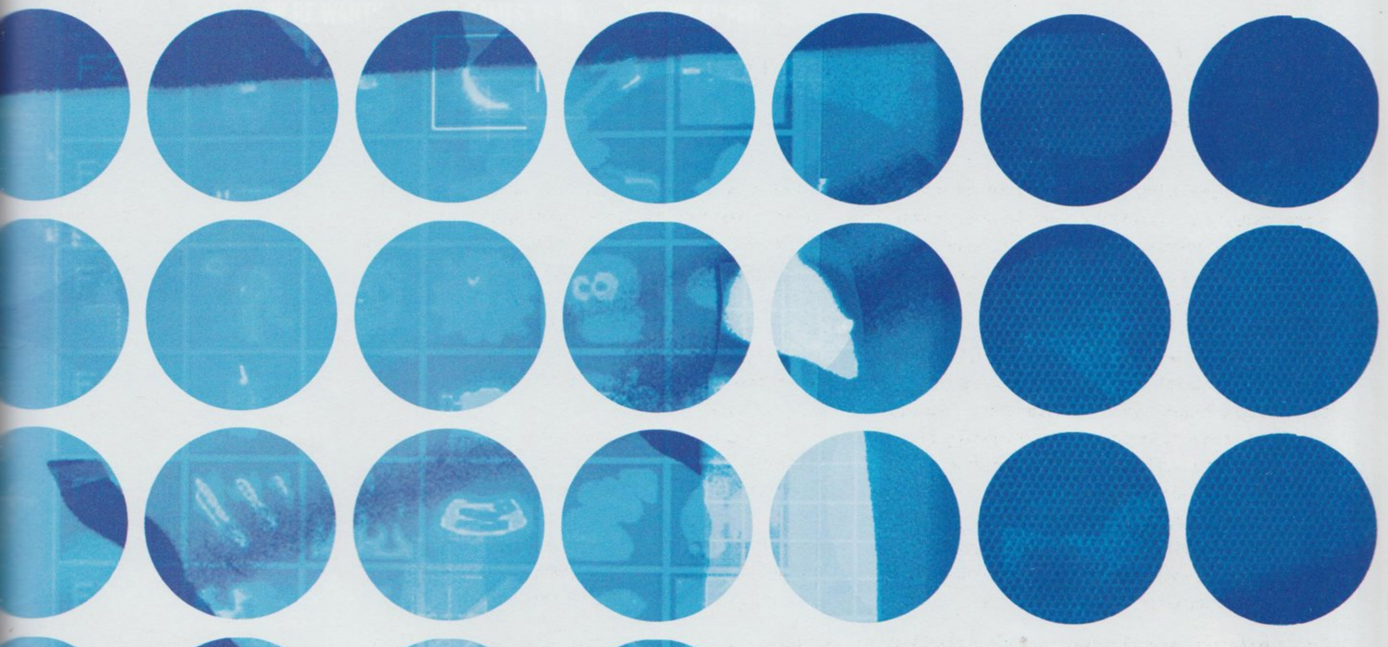
To stand a chance of winning this superb prize, all you have to do is answer this easy question:

Which fruit bomb can you use in *Worms Armageddon*?

Bonemant
200
26
14:56
Bucket
Vincent
Banana Bomb
SONY
SEGA



A WIDESCREEN TV!



Just answer the question, complete the coupon and post it (or a photocopy, or a postcard), with *all* the information requested, to the address shown below

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Send your entry to: Widescreen Worms Compo, CDC911A, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: Friday 19 November.)

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

☐ Tick if under 18 years of age (this information is required so we do not mail inappropriate material to minors)

☐ Tick if you are a current subscriber to *ODM*

Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions (available on request) apply. And all that. Phew!

burn rubber.

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Dreamcast

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THEY'RE HERE!

AFTER A MINOR FALSE START, DREAMCAST HAS FINALLY HIT THE UK – BIG TIME. YOU'LL NOW BE WANTING SOME GAMES TO PLAY ON IT, WE SUPPOSE

NORMALLY WHEN A NEW CONSOLE'S released, anyone eager enough to buy a machine straight away is punished with a pathetic game line-up. For the first few months, early adopters have to try desperately to convince their friends that their feeble driving game is actually "quite okay", and that each of the Lemmings has three more pixels than they did in the Amiga version.

Not so with Dreamcast. Right from day one there are plenty of top-quality exclusive games to cover everybody's gaming tastes – we challenge anyone not to fall in love with at least one of the launch titles. It can't be done! No matter what kind of games you're into, Dreamcast has something you'll go crazy for, from arcade fighting games to the most exciting fishing simulation ever!

Just to save you freaking out when you come across the Video Modes section at the end of each review, here's a brief explanation. It may get a little too techy for some of you, but it only lasts a few sentences – just try to hang in there, okay?

Basically, in Japan and the USA, games consoles (including Dreamcast) run at 60Hz instead of the 50Hz of European systems. This is because TVs over here all run at 50Hz. Normally, when a Japanese game is converted for use on a UK console, it runs 17 per cent slower than normal, plus you get black borders at the top and bottom of the screen. This is a shame.

Dreamcast is the first console to get around around this problem. First off, all games developed in Europe are being coded so that they run full-screen and full-speed at 50Hz, while the majority of games from Japan and the USA are having a 50Hz/60Hz option added. This will enable gamers with 60Hz-compatible televisions (most new or reasonably sized TVs will work just fine) to play in full-screen mode.

So, at the end of each of our reviews you'll find the Video Modes section where we tell you whether the game normally runs full-screen at 50Hz or whether there's a 60Hz full-screen option. We also say whether the game is compatible with the forthcoming VGA Box – a gadget which enables you to play certain Dreamcast titles on a PC monitor at a higher resolution than normal (see page 118). Still with us? That's it.

And so to this issue's games. We reviewed a number of Dreamcast launch titles in our Special Issue last month, but the already massive line-up has grown again since then. Another 16 games are reviewed this month, all of which should be on sale now. So turn the page and browse through the best collection of launch games you're ever likely to see.

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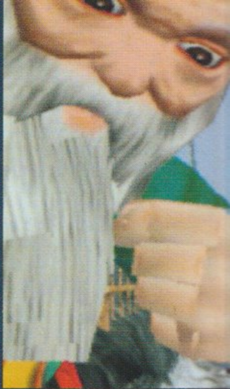
ODM RATINGS

A guide to *Official Dreamcast Magazine*'s stringent scoring system. If we say a game is no good, then it ain't worth buying. If it is, it is. Simple, really

10 PERFECT! A GAME WHICH EVERYONE *MUST* OWN. 9 AN ESSENTIAL BUY. GET IT, GET IT, GET IT! 8 EXCELLENT STUFF. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. 7 A GREAT GAME WITH A MINOR PROBLEM OR TWO. 6 GOOD BUT WITH AT LEAST ONE MAJOR SHORTCOMING. 5 STRICTLY AVERAGE, RUN-OF-THE-MILL STUFF. 4 BELOW AVERAGE. PLAY BEFORE YOU BUY! 3 OH DEAR, OH DEAR. THIS REALLY ISN'T VERY GOOD. 2 THE GAMING EQUIVALENT OF LEYTON ORIENT. 1 NOT WORTH THE PLASTIC IT'S PRESSED ON!



CALL DA DOCTOR

MIDWAY

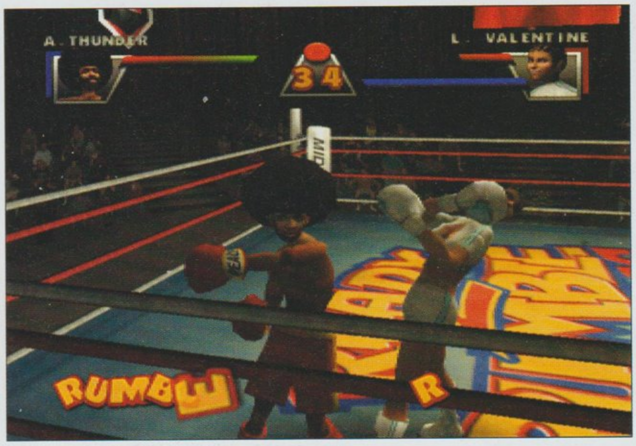
"FROM THE MOMENT YOU FIRST PICK UP YOUR JOYPAD AND START PLAYING THIS GAME, YOU'RE DUCKING, DIVING AND PUNCHING LIKE A TRUE PRO"

READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING

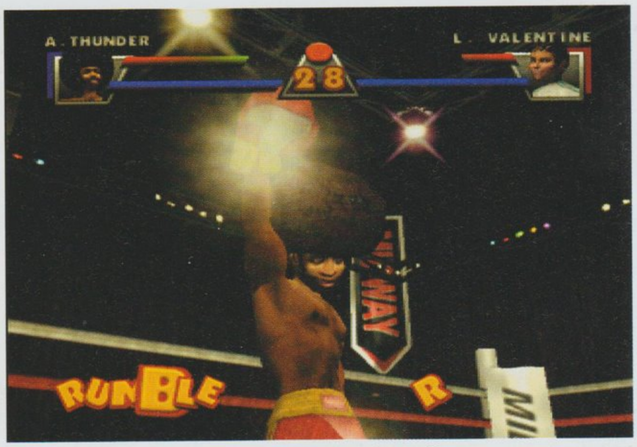
Midway's bruising boxing game is inviting armchair fight fans to come and have a go. **STUART DREDGE** thinks he's hard enough

WHO'D BE A BOXER? The best years of your life spent getting battered and bruised by opponents and ripped off by unscrupulous promoters, while at the end of it all you'll most probably be left with cauliflower ears, hazy memories, and a half-arsed career in panto. It's not much of a life.

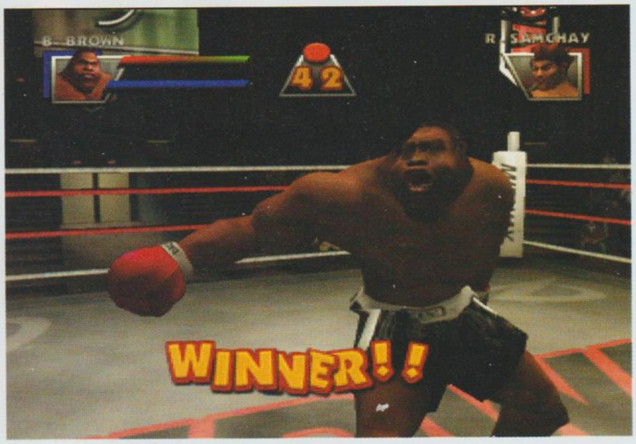
So why do so many fit, able-bodied young men – and women – flock to take part in the sport? It's probably the lure of fame, fortune and the chance to beat people up without getting arrested. But even for those of us who wouldn't normally say boo to a goose, there's something undeniably fascinating about boxing – it's the most glamorous sport by far. Think of boxing and you think of Las Vegas, flashing lights, Hollywood celebs and gold-toothed men in sharp suits. Okay, so very few boxers actually make it ▶



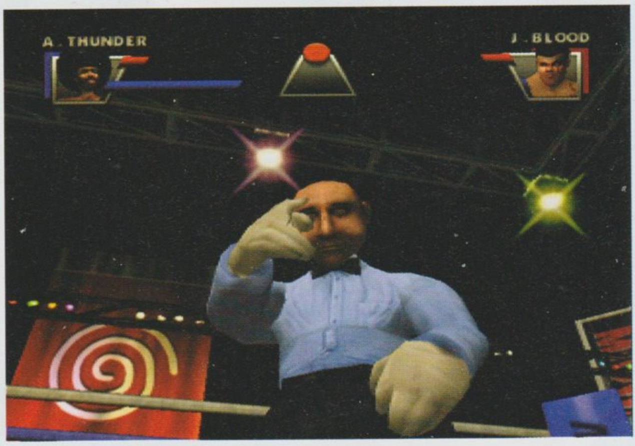
△ When you're slugging it out, the camera zooms up close.



△ Collect all six letters to make up the word and you're ready to Rumble.



△ After a victory, celebration is in order.



△ If you have this view too often, you need to improve your boxing skills.

> "NOVICES CAN STAND A FIGHTING CHANCE EVEN AGAINST EXPERT PLAYERS"

▷ that far, but the image persists. And it's the glamour of boxing that has made *Ready 2 Rumble* such a talked about title in the months leading up to its release. There are plenty of fight titles on the way for Dreamcast, and some of them even have the odd boxer, but *Rumble* is currently the only game that'll have Harry Carpenter licking his lips in anticipation.

SECONDS OUT

You can play *Ready 2 Rumble* in two modes: Arcade and Championship. Arcade mode flings you straight into the ring, pitting you against a succession of boxers in an effort to become champ. There's also the two-player mode where you each choose a boxer and get down to scrapping. In Championship mode you don't just fight, you also get to try your hand at management, although your involvement is limited to training up your boxers' skills via a series of sub-games. The aim is to take them through the ranks – bronze, silver and gold – to reach Champ status. Each time a boxer completes a rank, it unlocks another boxer for you to control.

There are 19 boxers in the game, each with their own abilities and special moves. Most wouldn't look out of place in the real world, while others, such as Salua the sumo wrestler, are more unorthodox. There are also two female boxers who are quite capable of giving their male rivals a good beating.

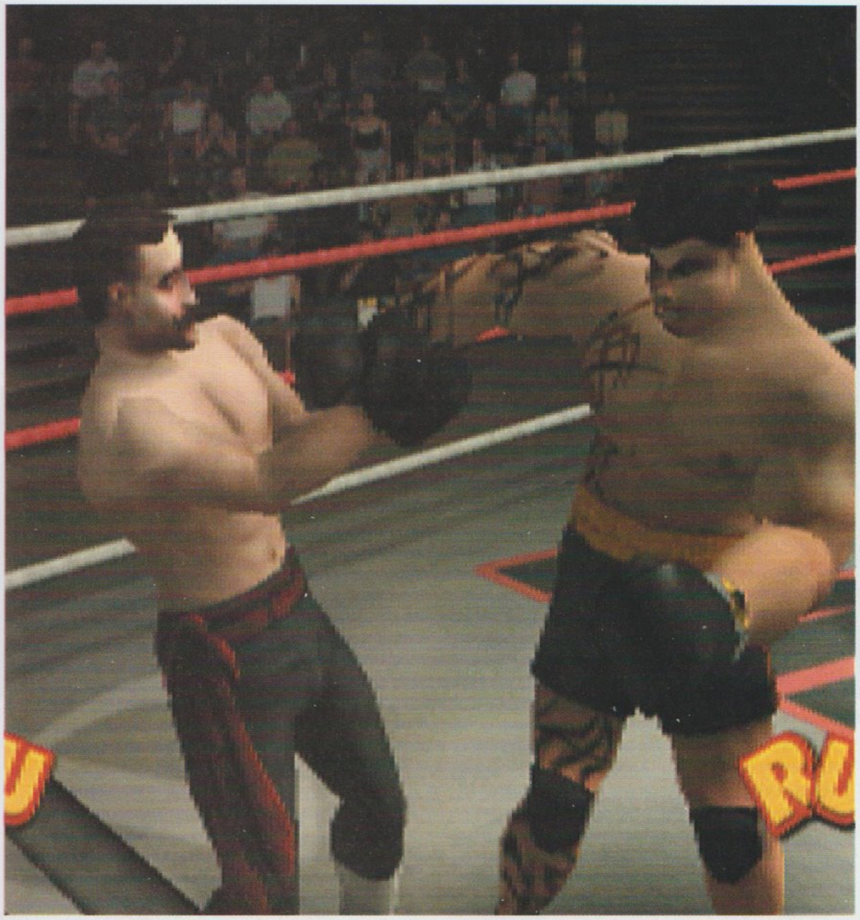
The boxing itself is mostly as you'd expect, with the fighters dancing around the ring throwing hooks, uppercuts and body blows. An added spin is given by the 'Rumble meter system': whenever you connect with a decent punch, you're awarded up to three letters from the word 'Rumble'. Come up with all the letters in the word and your fighter powers up into Rumble mode, where he can give your opponent a hammering. Not strictly realistic, but that's games for you.

BOX CLEVER

The first thing you notice when playing *R2R* is the look of the thing – it's pretty damn stunning. The boxers are satisfyingly big and beefy, and the animation is super-smooth. As you fight, the camera pans around the ring to give you as good a view as possible, zooming in when the fighters get close and personal.

Developers Midway apparently decided not to motion-capture any real boxers to create the animation for the game, and it shows in a good way. The animation isn't exactly cartoony, but it's fun, fluid, and oozes humour from every pore without ever turning into a crap comedy boxing game.

The atmosphere is also boosted by the crowd. In early matches, you fight in front of a handful of spectators, but for title matches you're centre-stage in a rammed arena. Admittedly the crowd members look strangely



△ Corner your opponent and dish out some serious damage.

flat – they're 2D images shoehorned into a 3D environment – but it all makes for an atmospheric big fight night feeling.

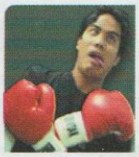
RING THE NOISE

It's not just the visuals that will have fight fans drooling, however. *R2R* plays like a dream. The intuitive controls mean that from the moment you first pick up your joypad and start playing this game, you're ducking, diving and punching like a true pro. On Dreamcast the learning curve is as near perfect as you're gonna get: it's great fun for button hammerers, but there's also great scope to develop your strategic instincts.

Think of it this way: when you start out, you'll probably dive straight in and slug it out with hooks and uppercuts, which is great fun. And you'll win – for a while. That's when you discover some special moves, and also begin to realise the importance of sometimes hanging back to plan your next move instead of flailing away like a fool.

Finally, you'll start stringing venomous combos together, and learning the strengths and weaknesses of the other boxers. The more you play this game, the more absorbing it gets.

That's not to say that the game is po-faced. Of all the Dreamcast launch titles, *Ready 2 Rumble* is the most pure, 100 per cent unadulterated fun to play, and ▷



SPEAK OUT

WE TRADE BLOWS WITH **EMMANUEL VALDEZ**, LEAD ARTIST AND CO-DESIGNER ON THE GAME

IS *READY 2 RUMBLE* A SIMULATION, OR AN ARCADE GAME?

Early on we were concentrating on making a more sim-like game, but we realised that it would be a lot more fun if we took the arcade route. We wanted to appeal to the masses, not just the hardcore boxing fans.

HAS THE CODE BEEN DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR DREAMCAST?

Yes. When we started developing the game, we knew that we had to create it for a next-generation platform. Dreamcast was available, so we designed the game specifically for the system.

WHAT'S THE MOST EXCITING THING ABOUT DREAMCAST?

Being able to have rich colours, beautiful effects, and its incredible poly-pushing capabilities.

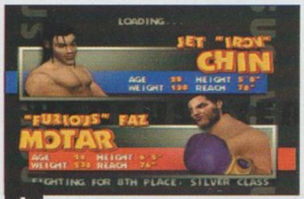
WHY ISN'T THERE ANY GORE IN THE GAME?

We wanted a more comical and fun feel. You can see your boxer bruise and swell according to where they get hit, and they also lose teeth as the game goes on.

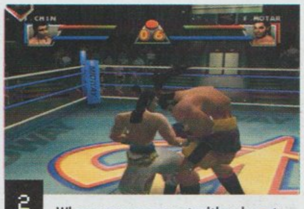
WALKTHROUGH

I GET A ROUND

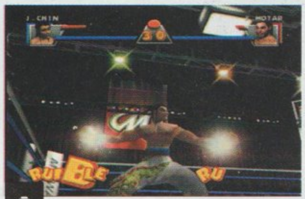
Okay, so every match is different, but if you're going to be a contender, your ideal fight might go something like this…



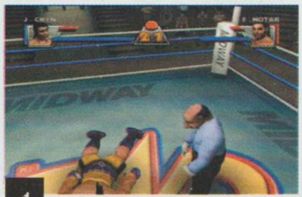
1 ▽ **It's tempting to steam straight in, but you might do better to land a few jabs to test your opponent's defences.**



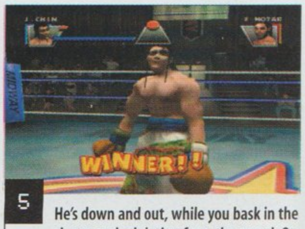
2 ▽ **Whenever you connect with a decent hook or body shot, you get some letters from the word 'Rumble'.**



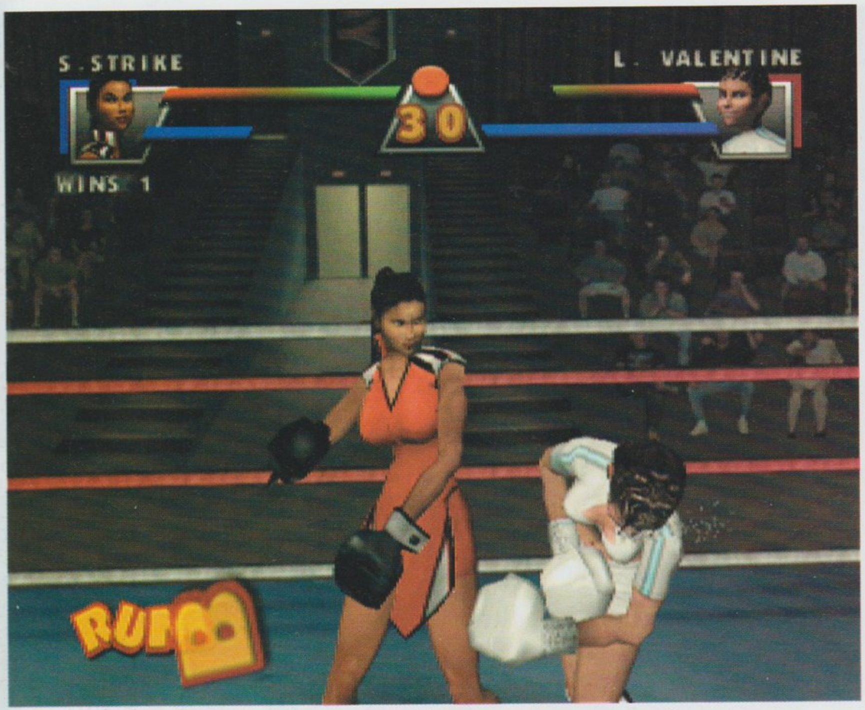
3 ▽ **When you've completed the word, you can power up to do maximum damage to your opponent.**



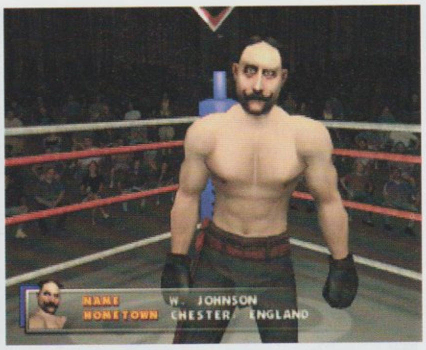
4 ▽ **Land enough blows and your rival staggers around like a drunk for a few seconds before hitting the canvas.**



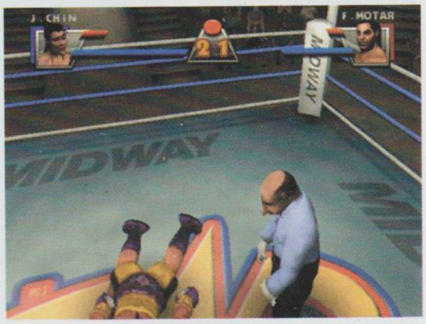
5 ▷ **He's down and out, while you bask in the cheers and adulation from the crowd. On to the next fight, champ…**



△ It's not just the guys who get to duke it out, there are two female boxers too.



△ This man is apparently a Brit. Scary.



△ Get it right and your opponent's out for the count.

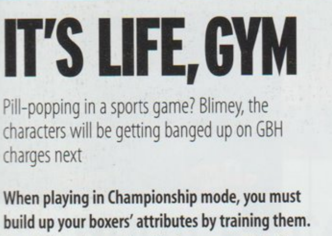
IT'S LIFE, GYM

Pill-popping in a sports game? Blimey, the characters will be getting banged up on GBH charges next

When playing in Championship mode, you must build up your boxers' attributes by training them. You do this via a series of sub-games which, if completed correctly, improve each fighter's strength, stamina and dexterity. Most are fairly simple tests of your reflexes and memory, and the better you do, the more your boxer's abilities are increased.

If you're having problems with the sub-games, you can set the training to automatic or, alternatively, go for the two courses of pills. They're described as a vitamin training programme and a mass nutrition regime, but that's a likely story, if you ask us.

Yes, realism is really getting into games.



△ Pump some iron to beef yourself up.

▷ probably the funniest too. It's also a real attention-grabber, as shown by the mobs of baying spectators who mysteriously gathered whenever the game was running in the *ODM* office.

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

The great thing about *R2R* is that it's got a lot of depth, particularly in the Championship mode. Taking every fighter through the ranks is one helluva challenge, each requiring you to learn new moves and strategies. For example, you might complete the game with the speedy Afro Thunder by dancing around your opponents and darting in for the odd crunching uppercut. Trouble is, that approach just ain't gonna work with a slower fighter such as Butcher Brown, who's better at slugging it out.

The system by which new boxers are unlocked as you take others through the ranks works well too. Initially you can choose from only a paltry four fighters, but the promise of new boxers, allied to the challenge of mastering each one's style, makes sure your interest doesn't wane. It's true that the Champ mode's management options aren't particularly complex, but as a whole it's got a lot of depth.

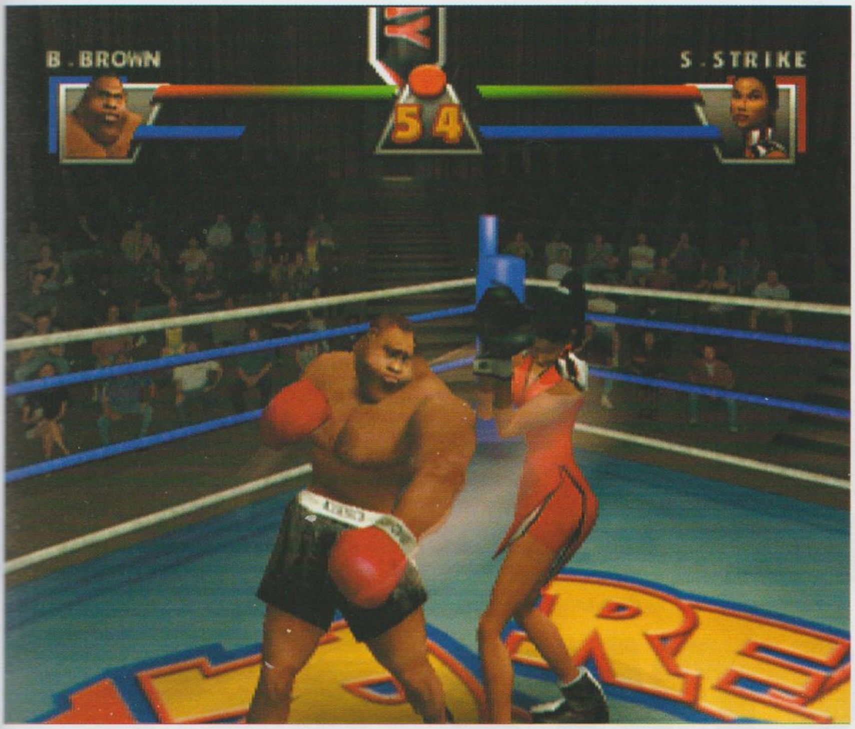
It's great as a solo game, but where *R2R* really comes into its own is in multiplayer mode. Not only is it a painless way to duff up your mates, it's also been designed so that novices can stand a fighting chance even against expert players. You can practice all you want in one-player mode, but when you've got a live human opponent, all your careful plans go out of the window. To put it another way: a flurry of uppercuts is a great leveller.

Dreamcast is supposed to be all about games as a social activity, right? Well, *Ready 2 Rumble* is the game your mates will want to play when you all pile home from the pub, and there are few higher recommendations than that. Unless you're a hermit, have chronic halitosis or have a bee in your bonnet about violent sports, *R2R* is an essential purchase for multiplayer mangling.

"*READY 2 RUMBLE* IS THE GAME YOUR MATES WILL WANT TO PLAY WHEN YOU ALL PILE HOME FROM THE PUB"

GLOVED UP

What lifts *R2R* into the realms of a console classic are the little touches. For example, sometimes, when you've unleashed a flurry of big hits on your opponent, they sway about drunkenly for a while, feebly trying to throw punches, before hitting the deck. Then there's the option to taunt your opponent from the other side of the ring, or the way you can see how much damage a boxer's taken from the bruises that gradually appear on his face.



△ Girls can't fight? Say that to the female pugilists in this game and they'd knock your bloody head off and stuff it down your shorts.

There are also the distinctive styles and personalities of the fighters themselves, each with their own unique moves and catchphrases. Current office favourite is the funked-up Afro Thunder, although there's also a fair amount of support for the strangely loveable Butcher Brown. The point is, you'll probably have a different preferred boxer every week, and it's surprising how hopping mad you get when your favourite has his features rearranged by a scurvy foe. It could even drive you to violence.

So far this review has been a hymn of praise. But what about the game's weak points? There are some, although most of them are niggles rather than major flaws. For example, it would be nice to have some sort of commentary during the matches, but the lack of it isn't a major downfall.

The management options are no great shakes – you can't choose who to fight, and the training is a chore once you've got the hang of the sub-games. Then again, you could argue that this doesn't matter in what is a mainly action-based game. Maybe this sort of thing will be included if there's ever a sequel. Like we said, these are only minor quibbles.

So, it's good. But with so many beat 'em ups launching with Dreamcast, you'll be wondering how it measures up against the competition. *Ready 2 Rumble* is a very different game to something like *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, whose complexity can put off anyone who hasn't played its earlier incarnations.

You don't need to learn hundreds of special moves and combos in order to enjoy *R2R*, making it comparable in that respect to the likes of *Power Stone* (see page 74). Both games will appeal to casual gamers as well as to hardened beat 'em up addicts, but if you're planning a lot of solo play then *Rumble* holds more depth.

Be warned though: overdoing it could well lead to false feelings that you can do this boxing lark like a champ and handle yourself against all comers in the real world. And when you start picking fights with strapping six-foot bruisers down your local, don't expect the consequences to be anything other than very painful and very messy – for you, that is. ◘

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**

VERDICT

FANTASTIC. THE IDEAL PARTY GAME

UPPERS
Easy to get into • Each fighter plays differently • Brilliant multiplayer fun

DOWNERS
Some commentary would be nice • Training sub-games can get tedious

IN ONE HOUR We had the beginnings of a fearsome left hook
WEBSITE www.midway.com
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 60Hz option, widescreen and VGA compatible

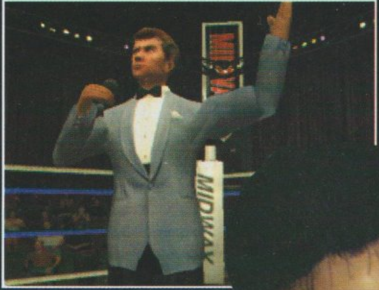
SCORE 9/10

RUMBLIN' MAN

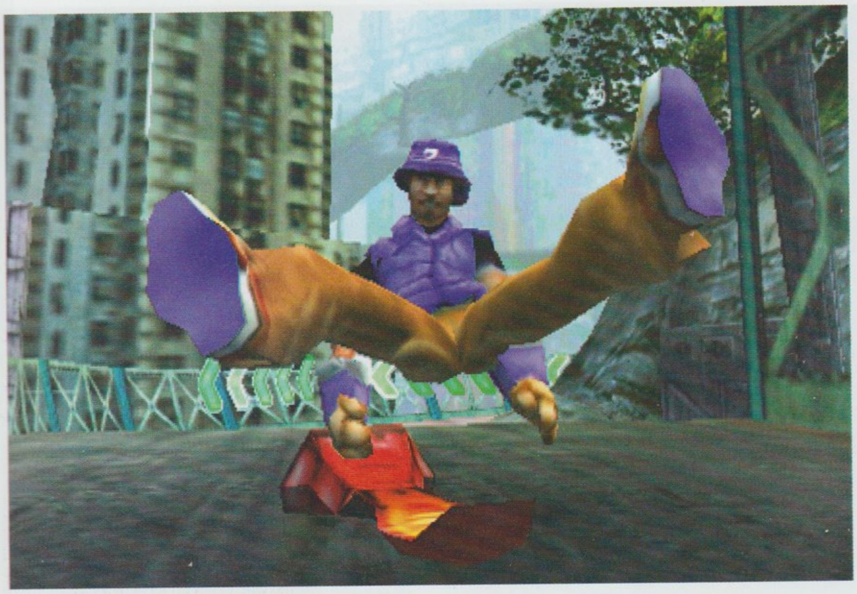
YES, YOU CAN MAKE A CAREER OUT OF SHOUTING YOUR MOUTH OFF AT SPORTS GAMES

So who *is* that bloke who shouts: "Let's get ready to rrrrrruuuumble!" at the start of every fight. Well, his name's Michael Buffer, and he's actually a famous name worldwide for doing just that. He doesn't just announce boxing matches, either. In the States, sports fans can't get enough of him, so he rolls out his catchphrase at gridiron, ice hockey, baseball, wrestling and basketball matches.

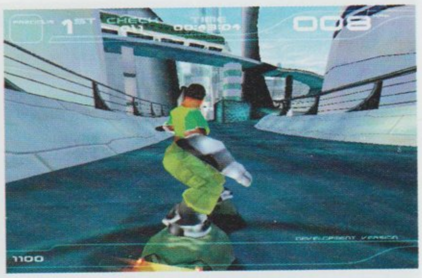
He began ring announcing in the early '80s, and has since become the undisputed world champ at, er, shouting: "Let's get ready to rumble". What's more, he's got a lucrative sponsorship deal with Budweiser, which should ensure that his vocal chords keep well-refreshed. Even better is the fact that not only is he known as 'the 007 of boxing' in Japan, he's also had a hit club record in Germany. David Hasselhoff, eat yer heart out.



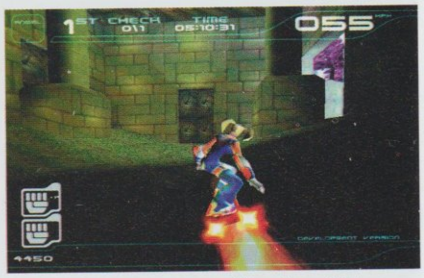
△ There's no need to shout.



△ Some of the tricks make you look dead cool.



△ Tokyo in the 23rd century. Not all that different, actually.



△ Best start turning soon, that wall is getting awful close.

TRICKSTYLE

Bust a futuristic move as cyberpunk meets street style in a world where winning races has as much to do with your prowess in the air as it does with your speed on the track. **DAN TRENT** gets board stupid

> "TRICKSTYLE HAS AS MUCH TO DO WITH STUNTS AND SHOWING OFF AS IT DOES WITH SIMPLY BEING THE FIRST OVER THE FINISH LINE"

PREDOMINANTLY THROUGH ITS snow-bound cousin, boarding in its various guises has been well represented in gaming over the last few years, with a glut of releases including the popular *Coolboarders* franchise and *1080° Snowboarding*, plus the recent *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. *TrickStyle*, while broadly similar in many ways, takes the genre into a whole new age as snow and wheels are ditched for 'Hover-Tec' technology, and familiar cities have been changed almost beyond recognition. While there is a convoluted and rather tedious explanation for the whole scenario, it's far simpler summed up thus: in the 23rd century, work has been abolished. And to stop everyone gnawing their own legs off through boredom, the trans-global corporation that runs the whole show has latched on to the previously underground sport of hoverboarding and made it into a media-friendly, multimillion-dollar international obsession. Tournaments are held all over the globe to pick the most skilful boarders in the world, who then battle it out in Aerial Tokyo in front of the eyes of millions.

STRUT YER STUFF

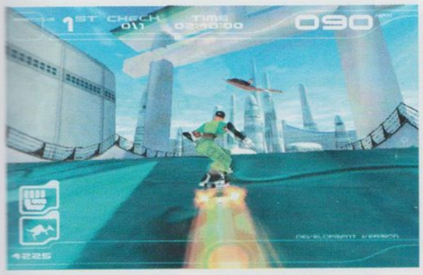
At first glance you could be mistaken for thinking that *TrickStyle* is simply *WipEout* on boards, but racing is only the half of it. As the name reveals, *TrickStyle* has as much to do with stunts and showing off as it does with simply being the first over the finish line. If straightforward racing is your bag, then you can concentrate on that – and great fun it is too – but you'll miss out on some of the best bits of a game that combines the thrills of racing games with the spills of a classic beat 'em up.

Starting out in the Velodrome, you're given the opportunity to zip around on your hoverboard and get used to the way it handles before pitting yourself against your competitors in one of two main arenas. The racing side of things is relatively straightforward: you race in the heats of one particular city, progressing to new tracks and boss races as you win the individual heats; or you can choose to accept a series of challenges and take part in a variety of different tasks designed to test and hone your hoverboarding abilities. These vary from racing through a testing sequence of hoops, to 'switching' hanging globes by flying through them before your opponent does. Triumph in the challenge, and you're awarded a new trick, which can be utilised in races and challenges and combined with others to score big points and look dead cool. Points can be as important as speed when it comes to winning races, and you must make good use of the characters and their various strengths and weaknesses in order to win the series and reap the rewards, which include souped-up hoverboards with which to further your campaign.

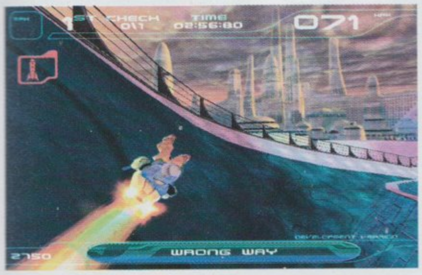
FLYING TONIGHT

Although the setting is futuristic and the actual hoverboards a work of fiction, much effort has gone into making the physics of the game as realistic as possible, and soaring 30 metres off the ground on a jet-propelled plank of wood does manage to seem convincing. Hit the ramp correctly and you feel the kick in your stomach as you soar upwards and the adrenalin kicks in. The effect is breathtaking, and particularly effective as you hang in the air on one of the big stunt bowls or on the vertical turns on the race courses. The sheer speed of the races is similarly impressive.

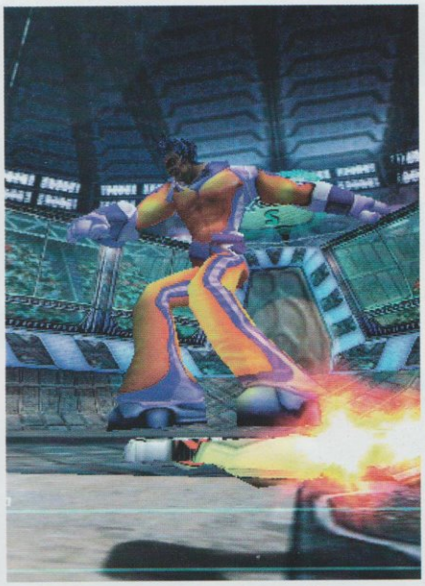
Other competitors, categorised as either 'bullies', 'stunters' or 'racers', are more than mere window dressing, and try all manner of dirty tricks to slow you



△ Out in front and looking good. Time for a trick.



△ Hit the luge button and a jet of fire appears from your bum.



△ In the Velodrome you can try out those crucial moves.

down, which is where the moves you've earned come in particularly handy.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

TrickStyle is definitely a game that rewards practice and skill, although it remains accessible enough to simply pick up and play, especially in its two-player mode. If there's a criticism, it's the rigid structure of the learning curve that pitches you in at the deep end and can prove extremely frustrating. Early challenges can sometimes sorely test your patience to persevere, and can leave you cursing your ineptitude and the lack of an easy introduction. You'll have another go though, as the satisfaction of pulling off a sweet combo is something that makes *TrickStyle* a game worth buying.

In fairness, it would be harsh to criticise a game for being too complex, and *TrickStyle* will doubtless be hugely enjoyable if you have the time and willingness to learn the moves and combinations – much as with the best fighting games. Similarly, it's great fun to pick up and play, although ultimately if you're simply looking for a slick, well-presented racer, you won't get the most out of it – there's much more to the game than that.

Visually eye-popping, and deeply involving, *TrickStyle* deserves to be checked out by any Dreamcast owner.

PRICE: **£40**
PUBLISHER: **ACCLAIM**
DEVELOPER: **CRITERION**

VERDICT

FAST-MOVING AND ACTION-PACKED, THIS IS A GAME THAT REWARDS SKILL

UPPERS
Much more than just a racing game • Very fast and very slick • Visually eye-popping

DOWNERS
Frustratingly rigid structure • Steep learning curve • Possibly a bit too complex

IN ONE HOUR Our fingers were hurting from all the intense button-bashing
WEBSITE www.trickstyle.com
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz plus widescreen

SCORE 7/10

SPEAK OUT

WE CHUCK A FEW QUESTIONS AT **FIONA SPERRY**, SENIOR PRODUCER AT DEVELOPERS CRITERION

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT YOUR GAME?
Ooh, just one?! I think the stunt system really makes it stand out. If you watch people playing things like *1080°*, you'll see they tend to leave the tricks out because it slows them down in the races, whereas in *TrickStyle* you need tricks to win. In that way it's closer to a fighting game than a racing game.

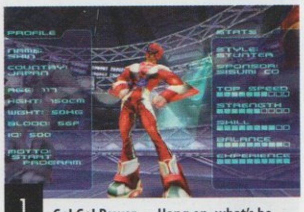
WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT DREAMCAST?
From a developer's point of view, Dreamcast is really accessible and easy to get on with, but from the consumer's side the Internet capability is definitely a key factor.

WHICH GAMES FROM OTHER DEVELOPERS ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO?
***Shenmue* is obviously really exciting, but I like the look of *Ready 2 Rumble* too. It looks like a real laugh!**

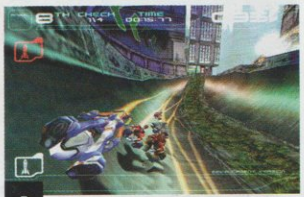
HOVERTHROUGH

AIR WALK

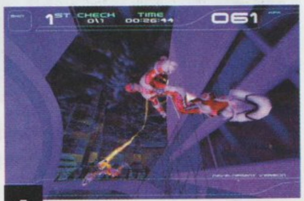
The fifth and final UK race level is where things start to get really interesting. Here are the top tips for finishing as numero uno…



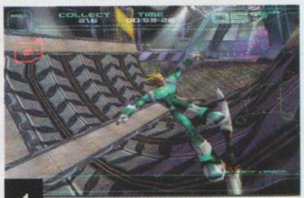
1 ▽ Go! Go! Power… Hang on, what's he doing there? (Even in the 23rd century they have crap TV.)



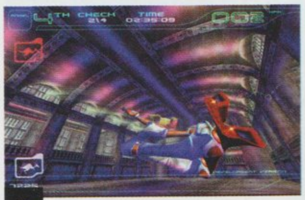
2 ▽ Hit the luge position for extra speed or when you just want to lie back and chill out.



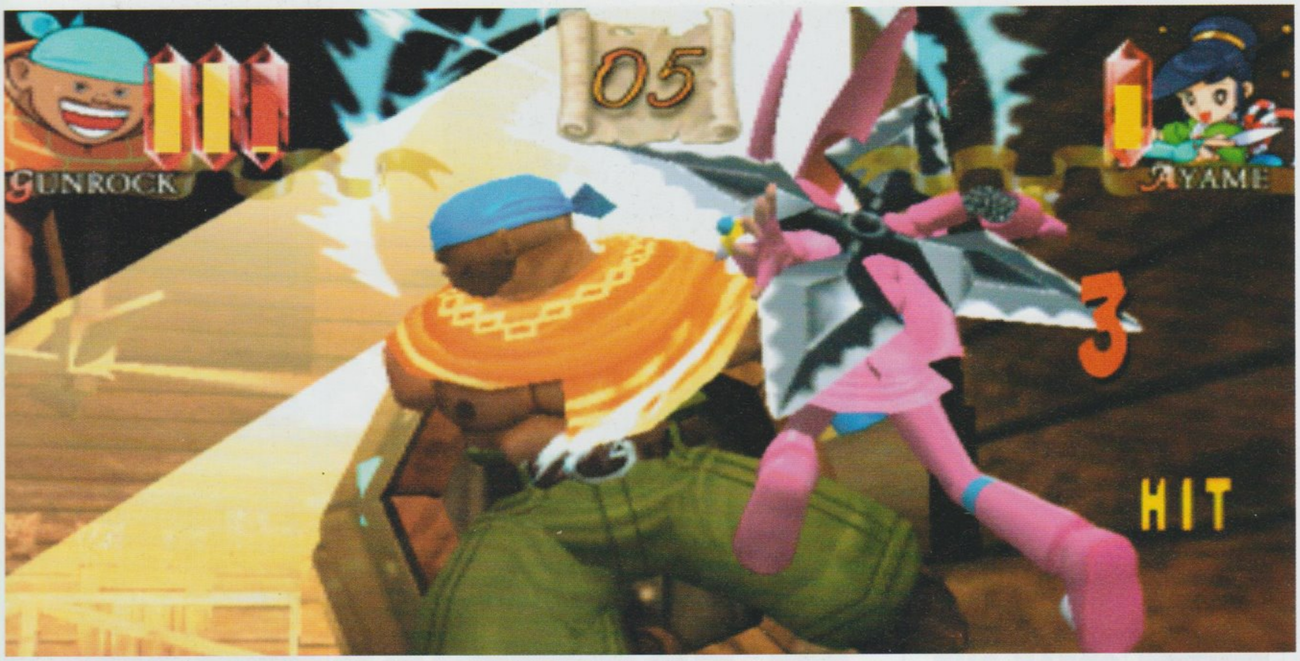
3 ▽ There he is again! Mr PowerRanger gives it some style on a wall ride in Aerial Tokyo.



4 ▽ Use the practice sessions in the Velodrome to hone your stunt skills for the competition.



5 ▷ Familiar landmarks crop up throughout the future cities. Here Angel carves it round Grand Central.



△ Often, when you unleash a special move, *Power Stone* enables you to see the (quite literally) gobsmacking results in close-up.

POWER STONE

Are you looking for a fight? Yeah? Then you've picked on the right game. **STUART DREDGE** emerges from the confrontation bruised, battered but mostly impressed

> "FASTER THAN MICHAEL OWEN RUNNING OVER HOT COALS WITH A ROCKET UP HIS ARSE"

IT MAY HAVE ONLY JUST BEEN LAUNCHED, but already Dreamcast is shaping up to be the console of choice for anyone who likes a scrap. You can already get your hands on *Virtua Fighter 3tb* (see page 76), *Ready 2 Rumble* (see page 66) and *Power Stone*, and in the next few months there are top-notch beat 'em ups like *Soul Calibur*, *Dead Or Alive 2* and *Street Fighter Alpha 3* heading our way. With so many contenders, every game has to have something special – those that don't are sure to be knocked out in the first round.

With that in mind, it's a fact that *Power Stone* is already one of the most eagerly awaited Dreamcast titles for fight fans. Even the pacifists in the *ODM* office have been queuing up to beat the living daylights out of each other ever since we managed to blag a Japanese version, so the European release has got a lot to live up to. Luckily, it hasn't disappointed.

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION

Let's be honest, the plot isn't exactly the most important part of a beat 'em up. Usually it's something to do with a mystical quest or an elite fighting tournament. Hell, it can't be long before someone releases *Did You Spill My Pint?*, centred around a pub brawl. Unaccountably, *Power Stone*'s developers spurned the latter idea in favour of, yes, a mystical quest. It's something to do with ancient power stones that can only be retrieved by – you guessed it – beating the crap out of people. Any excuse.

There are eight basic characters to control, falling loosely into the traditional fighting games stereotypes: the clean-cut good guy (Falcon), the big man (Gunrock), the hideously deformed mutant (Jack), and the obligatory slinky females (Rouge and Ayame). Each character has their own attributes and special moves, and the aim is to defeat all the other characters before taking on a succession of bosses. So far, so normal.

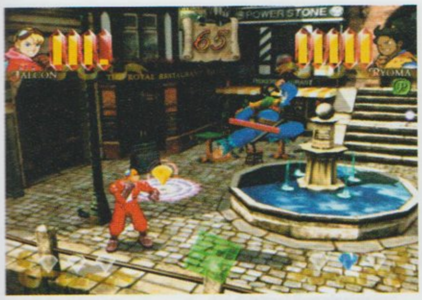
NO LIMITS

What makes *Power Stone* much more than just another bog-standard beat 'em up is the freedom given to the characters. Fights take place in various arenas, and you're given total freedom to run around, jump off walls and hang from the ceiling while fighting. What's more, you can pick up pretty much all the scenery and use it to batter your opponent: crates, barrels, park benches… even wooden pillars if you're playing as one of the stronger characters. It's a truly interactive environment, which is a new development for fighting games.

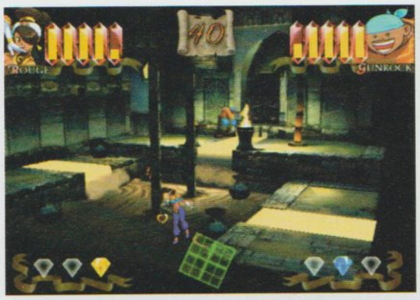
Rather than focus on using hundreds of complex moves, *Power Stone* makes you think more strategically. Although you can punch, kick and throw your opponents, there's more to it than that. For a start, there are three power stones which you can collect in each arena. Grab them all and your character is transformed into a super-being, capable of a range of spectacular special moves. Although it's tempting at first to simply race around the arena hammering away at the punch and kick buttons, you won't get far. Instead you need to concentrate on collecting the stones, and then using your special moves to cause maximum damage.

L!FE IN THE FAST LANE

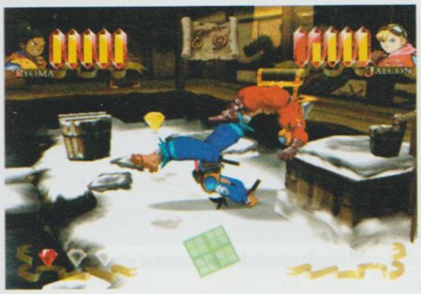
The first thing that strikes you is the blistering speed. Put it this way: *Power Stone* is faster than Michael Owen



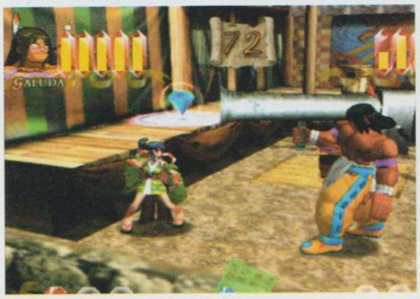
△ The London level's pub has a menu board and outside furniture with which to batter your opponent.



△ When the characters are far away from each other, the camera zooms out to give you an extra perspective.



△ Disaster loomed for the drunken gymnasts.



△ Whoever said beat 'em ups had to be fair?

running over hot coals with a rocket up his arse. The characters zip around the screen like nobody's business, meaning that you barely get time to blink, let alone plan your next move. At first it can be a bit daunting, but after Dreamcast has whupped you a few times you begin to get used to the frenetic pace. All your thinking has to be done on the move, making it truly a game to get your adrenalin flowing.

All this speed leaves you little time for sightseeing, which is a shame, because *Power Stone* looks gorgeous. Anyone who's aware of Japanese manga animation will recognise the style of the characters – they're all eyes, with elfin features. It's the arenas that really grab the attention though. Each one is exquisitely rendered, with the British town square particularly memorable for its pub scene – and the way you can pick up the menu board and twat your opponent with it.

COME TOGETHER

So, it moves fast and looks good, but how does it play? There's no doubt that it has the 'sticky' addictiveness factor that's an essential part of all classic games. It's quite capable of keeping your fingers clamped to your controller until you've defeated the final boss – and then, of course, you have to do it again with a different character just to prove you can. Late nights are a certainty with this game, particularly if you drag a few mates back from the pub.

It's as a multiplayer game that *Power Stone* really comes into its own. Playing solo, with practice it's a little easy to complete. The idea is that you carry on playing with other characters getting rewards to unlock extra weapons and so on. There are different modes to unlock, such as the frightening first-person perspective view and split-screen two-player mode. And finally there are some great games for the VM unit, including a fruit machine and shooting gallery. Completing them unlocks other modes revealing extra game art and soundtracks.

The extras are nice, but more depth in the one-player mode would be nicer. That's not to say *Power Stone* isn't an extremely impressive game – it's blisteringly fast, looks fantastic and plays like a demon. The solo mode may not keep you hooked forever, but as a multiplayer experience it's up there with the best. Experienced fighting fans will relish the challenge, while even newbies may well be tempted by its charms.

That old crooner Bob Dylan was right, y'know: everybody must get *Stoned*.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM**

- *The official UK release of* Soul Calibur *is reviewed in the next issue of* ODM, *on sale Thursday 11 November.*

VERDICT

THRILL-PACKED BEAT 'EM UP

UPPERS
Super-speedy gameplay • Not full of over-complex combos • Fantastic multiplayer mode

DOWNERS
Most of the characters play a bit too similarly for long-term solo play

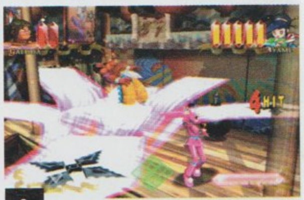
HIGH SCORE IN ONE HOUR We'd just discovered how important the drop kick is
WEBSITE www.eidos.com.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS 2 simultaneously
VIDEO MODES Borders 50Hz, VGA option

SCORE 8/10

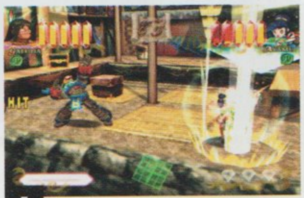
WALKTHROUGH

GET STONED

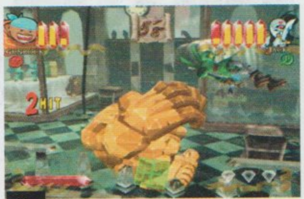
Once you've powered up by collecting all three stones, you can kick your opponent's arse with some fearsome moves. Here are some of the best...



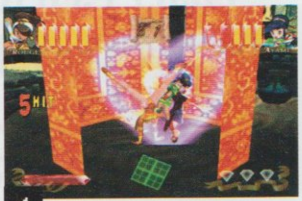
1 As Ayame, you can send out a blizzard of pink shurikens that whizz around the arena before homing in on your enemy.



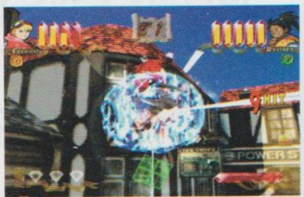
2 Galuda can whip out a huge bow and fire off a torrent of light arrows, literally rooting your opponent to the spot.



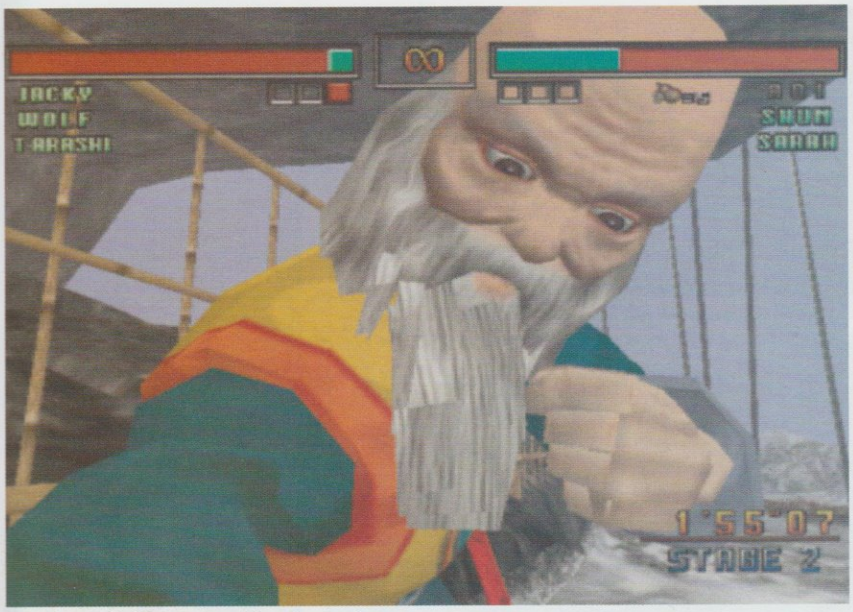
3 Play as Gunrock and you get to swell to three times your normal size and transform into a huge boulder.



4 Rouge has this devastating move up her sleeves. It's hard to explain, but it involves love hearts and a wall of flame.



5 Ryoma can transform into a huge ball of electricity and propel your opponent into the sky, shocking them all the way.



△ In first-person view you can see right up characters' noses.

△ Lion Rafale knows how to handle himself in a rumble surprisingly well for a rich kid.

SARAH
JEFFRY

△ Sarah's catsuit attracts lots of unwanted attention.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 3TB

Some say it's the greatest arcade fighter ever, others write it off as a failed home translation. Can it really be both? **ED LOMAS** finds out

> "YOU CAN CREATE YOUR OWN COMBOS, INSTEAD OF HAVING TO MEMORISE TONS OF NONSENSICAL BUTTON PRESSES"

IF YOU KNOW ABOUT REAL-LIFE FIGHTING, you'll know that you should always go for the eyes first, then the genitals, followed by… a quick sprint into the distance. You'll also know that *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is the best videogame representation of unarmed combat in the world – the arcade version, that is. The Japanese Dreamcast release got some stick for not having a proper two-player versus mode, not having any decent home-exclusive features, and generally feeling a little rushed, but Sega quickly promised that these problems would be sorted out for the UK release. Unfortunately we've got a bit of bad news for those fans who've been waiting patiently to find out whether Sega would be true to their word.

But first let's concentrate on the good news: this is a conversion of one of the best arcade games ever made, and it's got just about everything that made it so fantastic in the first place. There's the graphics, for a start. Even though they're a bit squashed and ever so slightly less smooth than they could be, they're still amazing. We shouldn't forget that *Virtua Fighter 3tb* is a state-of-the-art, multi-thousand-pound arcade game, so it's a bit cheeky to complain about things like Shun's beard not moving quite right in our £40 conversion. The little niggles merely take some of the shine off one of the most amazing-looking games around.

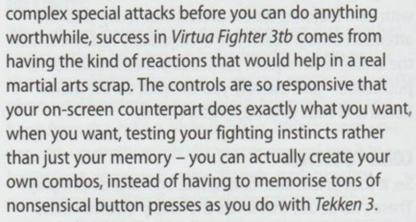
It's not just the fighters themselves who look good either – just check out those backgrounds. Instead of being flat pictures sliding left and right like dodgy theatre scenery, they're fully 3D and go right off into the distance. The bit you fight on isn't always a perfectly flat bit of floor either – steps, hills and walls can be used to your advantage if you know what you're doing (check out the Background Info walkthrough opposite to see what we mean).

The characters are very special too: 12 of the most memorable fighters outside of the *Street Fighter* series, each with their own convincing personality and unique fighting style. If you haven't got one already, you can pick a favourite almost immediately, whether it be a graceful female dancer or a crazy, bearded tramp.

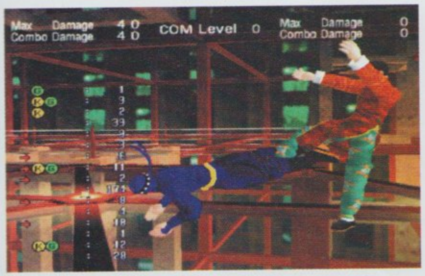
Learning how to fight as each of these characters isn't a problem either. Instead of being forced to memorise complex special attacks before you can do anything worthwhile, success in *Virtua Fighter 3tb* comes from having the kind of reactions that would help in a real martial arts scrap. The controls are so responsive that your on-screen counterpart does exactly what you want, when you want, testing your fighting instincts rather than just your memory – you can actually create your own combos, instead of having to memorise tons of nonsensical button presses as you do with *Tekken 3*.

SERIOUS STUFF

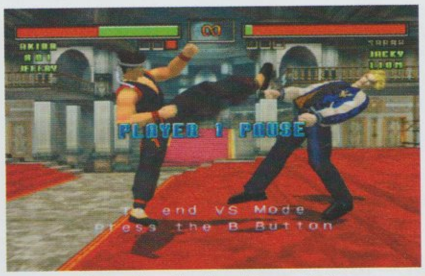
So that's why so many people around the world love *Virtua Fighter 3tb*. But is the Dreamcast conversion



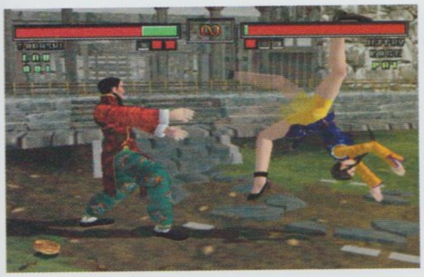
△ Avoid jumping too much – it leaves you vulnerable.



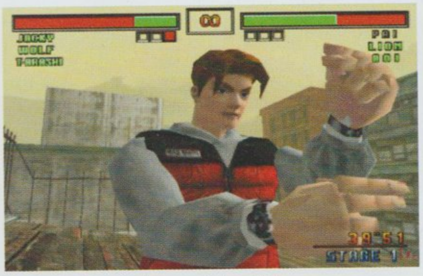
△ **The training mode has been improved for the UK version, though it's still not a particularly exciting option.**



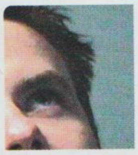
△ **No, we didn't accidentally take a picture while the game was paused. This is to prove that Sega have added a quit option.**



△ **Some attacks are so quick that they leave motion blurs.**



△ **The detail on the characters is incredible.**



SPEAK OUT

WE SPOKE TO MATT SEGA'S **MATT O'DRISCOLL** *(NOT HIM AGAIN! – ED)* ABOUT THE GAME

HOW LONG DID YOU SPEND ON THE UK VERSION OF *VF3TB*?
About eight or nine months in total.

WHAT'S THE BEST FEATURE OF THE GAME?
The sheer number of different moves and combos you can pull off. Getting to grips with any one charatcer is a feat in itself, but it really does take a huge amount of time and skill to master all the characters fully.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE THREE-CHARACTER TEAM?
Jacky, Jacky and Jacky! If I was forced to mix them, then I guess it would be Jacky, Lion and Shun Di.

going to win over a whole new bunch of players? Unfortunately it's not likely to. Though there's now a proper two-player versus mode, not a lot else has been done to tidy up the loose ends left over from the Japanese release.

There's still no 'quit' option when you pause in single player mode (instead you must hold down all four buttons and press Start to reset the entire game); watching the *History Of Virtua Fighter* video footage still means you can't save your most recent fight data (though there's now a warning message telling you beforehand); and – the biggest shame of all – there's no 60Hz option to get the game running full-screen. Thankfully, work has been done to make sure it still plays at a good speed, but the black borders are nevertheless a little disappointing.

Though none of these are massive problems, they combine to become enough of a problem that the overall effect of the game is damaged. Also, *Virtua Fighter 3tb* never had the same chunky, instant fun factor of the first two games because of its more realistic feel, so it's not likely to convert any non-fans.

What we're left with is a top-quality fighting game which, unfortunately, will fail to make much of an impact with the majority of people who see it – even big fans of the arcade series may find it hard to get excited by this home translation.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **AM2/GENKI**

VERDICT

A FIGHTING CLASSIC WHICH HAS LOST ITS EDGE ON THE WAY HOME

UPPERS
Brilliant characters • Near-perfect control and design • Spectacular graphics • Masses of depth

DOWNERS
Feels unfinished • Only exciting against other good players • Weak sound effects

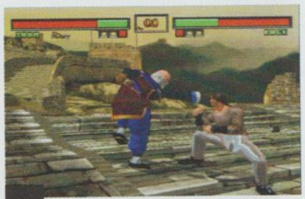
IN ONE HOUR Complete on normal setting
WEBSITE www.dreamcast-europe.com
CHECK OUT To get the most out of the game, use one of the fan guides on www.gamefaqs.com
MAX PLAYERS 2 simultaneously
VIDEO MODES Bordered,50Hz, VGA compatible

SCORE 7/10

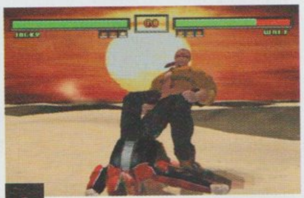
WALKTHROUGH

BACKGROUND INFO

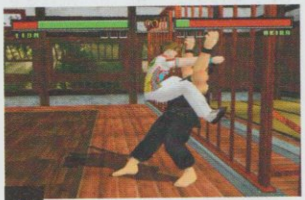
The 12 fighting arenas each have a different size and shape. Try each one to find the best way of using the scenery to your advantage



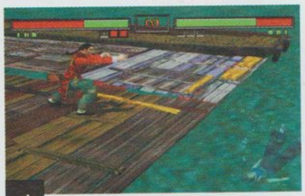
1 ▽ **It's best to be on a lower step than your opponent so you can head-butt them in the nuts easily.**



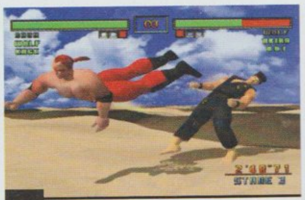
2 ▽ **The desert stage: you can find an invisible wall if you keep moving in one direction long enough.**



3 ▽ **Each fighter has some very cool throws and attacks which use walls surrounding the arenas.**

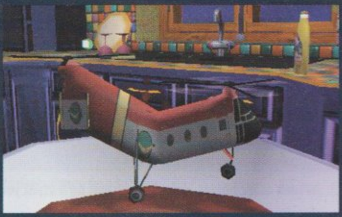


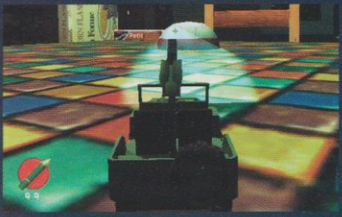
4 ▽ **Force someone off this wobbly raft and into the water and they gurgle hilariously as they drown.**

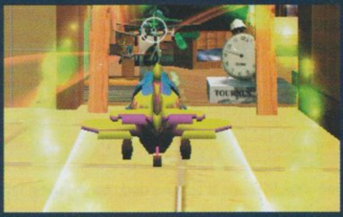


5 ▷ **There are alternative versions of each background in Team Battle mode.**

"A HUGELY ENJOYABLE GAME WITH MASSES OF DETAIL"







TOY COMMANDER

Mistreat your toys as a kid? Then you'd better watch out, cos they're coming after you and, as **DAN TRENT** found out, they're in no mood to be cuddly

ON THE CD

DESCRIBING *TOY COMMANDER* in a few words isn't easy. It's kind of for kids, but then again it isn't. It's *Command & Conquer* in the kitchen. It's *Sega Rally 2* on the living room carpet. It's *Quake* in your kid sister's bedroom. It's all this and more. And it also happens to be a whole load of fun.

Playing this game for too long could seriously mess with your sense of perspective and scale. No longer will that cornflakes box merely be a useful container for your morning cereal, it now marks that tricky turn in your first air race. And that hoover, sitting benignly in the cupboard? It's the perfect weapon for defeating attacking enemy tanks, of course. Before you know it you'll be crouching on top of the sideboard, muttering strange oaths about the machine-gun nest at the top of the stairs.

Combining elements of *Micro Machines* and *Toy Story*, *Toy Commander* takes place in the rather plush abode of young Guthy, a cute-looking but slightly spoilt brat who's been neglecting and maltreating his vast toy collection. While for most of us this would have resulted in a clip round the ear and a stern lecture from mum, the consequences in Guthy's world are slightly more serious: his bear Hugolin tools up, instigates a toys' revolt and declares himself "Toy Commander". A challenge is set, and you must duel with Hugolin and his chums in order to regain control.

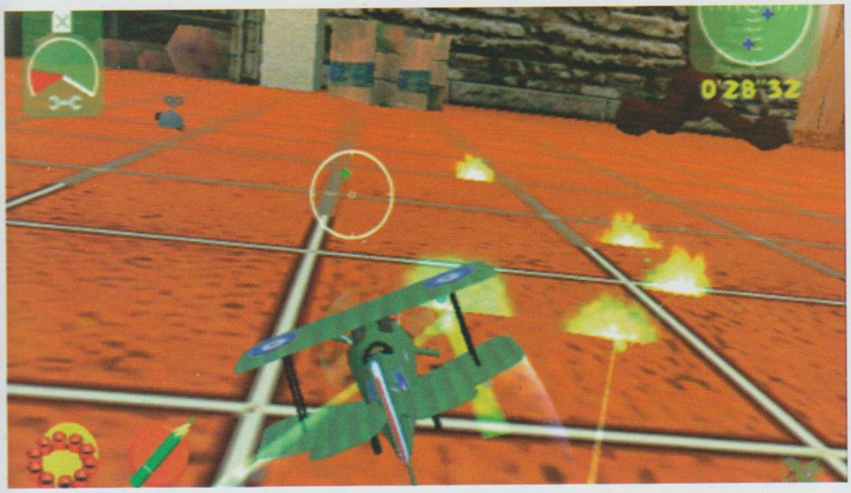
There are more than 50 missions to complete, set by Hugolin's stooges who control the eight areas over which the battle rages. Defeat them in combat and they turn their loyalty against the rebellious bear and assist you in his ultimate downfall. Don't expect them to be a walkover though, because they stop at nothing to prevent you from achieving your goals: innocent dolls are besieged by miniature Tiger Tanks, paper birds are shot out of the sky by errant stationary (in this world pencils are guided missiles, and rubbers are deadly bombs), and livestock is gassed with stinky trainers. At your disposal to assist with your tasks is a fleet of more than 30 miniature vehicles comprising planes, helicopters, tanks, cars and trucks, along with squads of plastic soldiers.

BRAWN, BRAINS AND SKILL

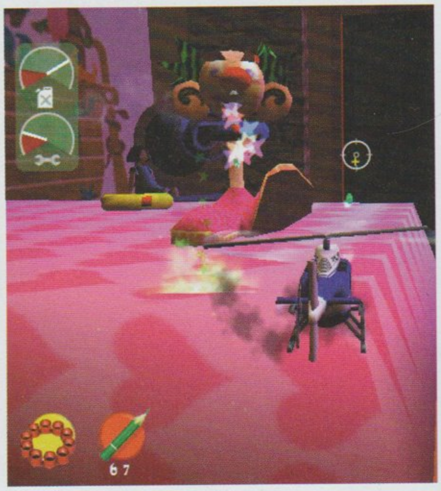
You need all these attributes if you're to succeed at *Toy Commander*. Missions take one of three basic formats: straightforward races around the miniature world of books, upturned skateboards and chair legs; military-style blast 'em up missions involving the destruction of enemy vehicles and installations; and more strategic tasks requiring the correct management and use of limited resources.

Looking at the screenshots and artwork here, you could easily be led into thinking that *Toy Commander* is a game for kids. Certainly the colourful environments and toy vehicles may suggest that it is, but closer examination reveals a world created by people the same age as you and me. This means the toys featured probably make as little sense to the cyber-obsessed youth of today as *Trumpton* and playing out on bikes. No, these are old-skool toys from the days when kids were kids, toys were toys, and the phrases 'Made in China' and 'Batteries not included' didn't exist.

Scalelectrix track forms runways and bridges, building blocks are battlements and blockades, Lego Duplo figures need to be rescued, and plastic army figures are your comrades. It's a ▷



△ "Red Leader to squadron – bandit mouse at eleven o'clock. Am engaging. Tally ho!"



△ As with other bosses, defeat Ringo and he'll assist you later.

SPEAK OUT

WE SPOKE TO **DAVID CHOMARD**, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AT NO CLICHÉ

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?

For me I think it would be the variety of different missions and the originality – although it uses influences from other games, we'd like to think there's nothing like *Toy Commander* around.

WHAT'S THE MOST EXCITING ASPECT OF DREAMCAST?

Graphically it's amazing – there is nothing else like it – and also the way it's going to open up network play to a whole new range of people.

WHAT'S THE BEST GAME YOU'VE SEEN FROM OTHER DEVELOPERS?

For the graphics alone I'd have to say *Soul Calibur*, and for the gameplay we all really like *Ready 2 Rumble*.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE FUTURE OF GAMING?

I think the most exciting thing is the growth of network play, and I think that is the way games are going to go.

WHAT'S IN THE PIPELINE FROM NO CLICHÉ?

It's early days but we are looking to build on the success of *Alone In The Dark* and create something that has never been seen before in horror and adventure games.

surreal world where lampshades become planets surrounded by hostile spacecraft, and the bath is a U-boat base.

TABLE MANNERS

Before you do anything, you first need to master the control of the vehicles and weapons, and to enable you to do this there's a training level comprising tests of all the skills you need to complete the missions (see the walkthrough below for details of the extra features of this level). The developers stress that the controls are intended to be arcade-fun rather than simulator-perfect. And while the airborne craft are a little trickier to master than the ground-based ones, you're soon zipping around with ease. The analog controls on the pad are especially well-utilised. The fine control over speed and direction are particularly useful on some of the more precarious driving sections, and aiming weapons at your adversaries is, well, child's play.

Once you've got driving, piloting and shooting sussed, you can get on with the really fun part of exploring and interacting with the hugely detailed and beautifully rendered environments in which the game takes place. The sense of space and scale is brilliantly realised, and you quickly find yourself sucked into the miniaturised world of Guthy's house. You know a game is good when you find yourself ducking as you swoop under tables, and craning your head sideways as you struggle to make that turn round the back of the taps. Nothing is out of bounds: you can fly under chairs and tables, drive round the back of furniture and down plugholes. Which means it's well worth thoroughly getting to know each room that you enter in order to find the best hiding places, power-ups and escape routes. Each room features scores of interactive elements, such as working light switches, which are mostly superfluous to the game but undeniably fun.

LET BATTLE COMMENCE

Great graphics and easy controls are worth diddly squat without decent missions to complete, and fortunately this is another area in which *Toy Commander* excels. The fundamental structure of the game enables you to make quick progress into the new rooms, and the huge variety of tasks means the game never gets repetitive or dull.

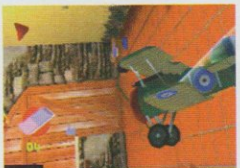
The skill level is also pleasingly varied, with some missions very straightforward and others requiring a more cerebral approach to strategy or puzzle solving. Reading between the lines of the game briefings provides clues to the best way of completing it or locating allies, vehicles or power-ups, although there's plenty remaining that requires you to figure it out for yourself. Solutions to problems are often amusing and far from immediately obvious, such as the level that dumps you into the middle of a pitched tank battle in an unarmed car, with instructions to "knock out the enemy tanks…", or having to recover the helicopter you need from the web of an extremely irritable spider.

While access to the new rooms is easy, to actually

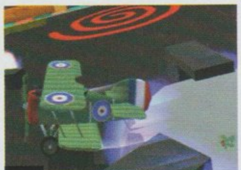
WALKTHROUGH

FUN IN THE KITCHEN

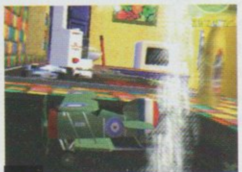
The training level in the kitchen enables you to practice the skills you need to regain the title of Toy Commander. Eventually you'll have to do it within the time limit, but save that for later. In the meantime, let's have fun…



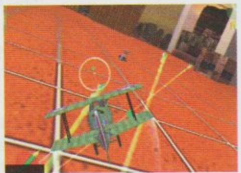
1 **Complete freedom of movement shows off the detailed environments.**



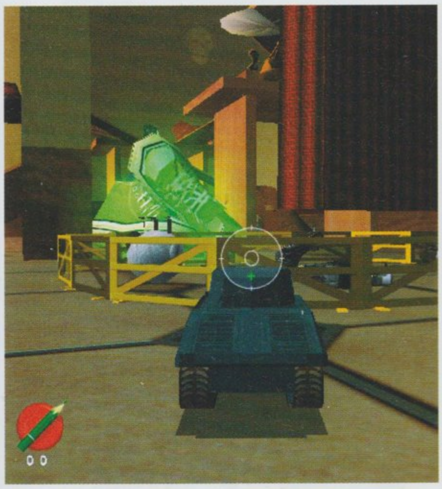
2 **You can turn the gas on, but mind you don't get too close!**

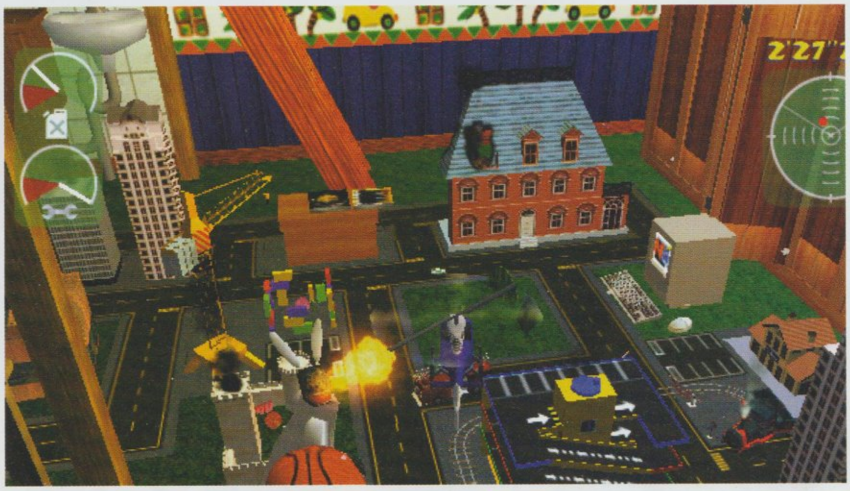


3 **Just as well you can turn the taps on too.**



4 **The nippy little clockwork mouse is a good test of your shooting skills…**


△ Sanitise stinky trainers. In a tank.


△ Godzilla's curry breath can fry you to a crisp.

"UP TO FOUR CAN PLAY IN A SPLIT SCREEN DEATHMATCH"

progress in the game you must to knock out the room's guardian, and to qualify for *that* you need to have completed at least four of the tasks within a time limit set by the relevant boss. This is a clever move, as it gives you the choice of whether to speed through and have a look at the other rooms and try all the different missions, or take a more methodical approach.

The time limits are often extremely tight, which means that although you may complete the objective on the first attempt, doing it on schedule is a different matter and requires practice. The open structure prevents you getting too holed-up, because if you're having trouble with a particular stage you can leave it, do something else and come back to it later.

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!

What we haven't mentioned so far is the multiplayer mode, and this is one area that has attracted less than positive reports from those previewing the game. Up to four can play in a *GoldenEye*-style split screen deathmatch, and while it's a nice idea it can ultimately fall victim to the scale of the scenarios. Just like your kid brother's toy cars that got under your feet and sent you flying when you were little, your opponents are bastard hard to spot, and it can take you a good while to even track them down, let alone take them out. The ability to switch vehicles mid-game and reasonably smooth gameplay do encourage you to experiment, and with practice you can become good enough to enjoy yourself, but ultimately this mode is a disappointment compared to the single-player game.

TIME FOR BED

Ultimately, *Toy Commander* is a hugely enjoyable game with masses of detail and great depth. The cute design and storyline mean it will appeal to the younger end of the market, while the humour and often tricky gameplay means it has plenty to interest the more mature. Dedicated gamers may frown at the bright colours and lack of blood and gore, but it's probably fair to say that some levels and bosses are a bit too easy.

Aside from that and the niggles with the multiplayer mode, this game is exactly the sort of thing Dreamcast needs in order to show off its talents to as wide an audience as possible, and in that respect *Toy Commander* succeeds admirably.

PRICE: **AROUND £39.99**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **NO CLICHÉ**

VERDICT

RICH IN DETAIL AND INVOLVING, IT'S MORE THAN JUST A KIDS' GAME

UPPERS
Lovely to look at • Detailed • Ease of play • Quirky humour

DOWNERS
Multiplayer mode can be disappointing • Too easy at times

IN ONE HOUR We completed The Good, The Bad And... You in 3.09.86 (Boss's time 4.22.00)
WEBSITE www.nocliche.com
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full-screen 50Hz, plus widescreen and VGA compatible

SCORE 8/10

5 ...Practice makes perfect, as they say.

6 Drop the sugar in the coffee to progress to the next challenge.

7 While we wouldn't condone animal cruelty, the cat can be woken up.

8 Make a mess without getting nagged by the parents.

9 The state of this kitchen is driving me up the wall!

UEFA STRIKER

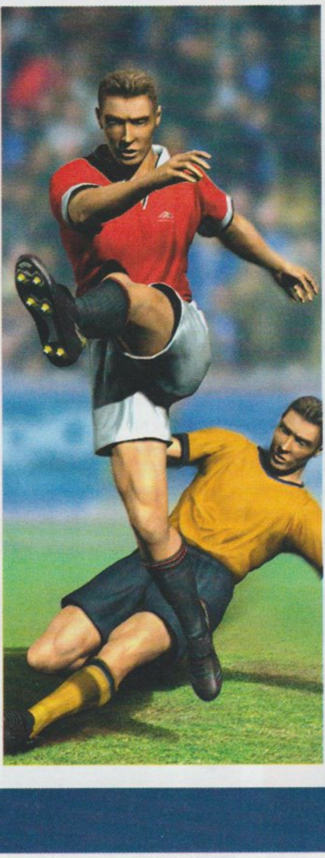
The beautiful game has produced some beautiful games, and Dreamcast deserves one. Your referee: **STEVE HILL**

EVER SINCE THE ADVENT OF VIDEOGAMES, there have been countless attempts to replicate the national sport. Even back when fans used to stand up to watch the match (and run home to avoid the shoeing), a steady flow of primitive football games appeared on the systems of the day. Further back than that – when spectators wearing flared trousers and platform shoes used to kick each other in the face – there was Subbuteo, one of the most godawful excuses for entertainment yet conceived. Be grateful, then, that we now live in Space Year 1999 and have the Awesome Power of Dreamcast™ at our fingertips, as opposed to a headless centre forward and a goalkeeper with no arms. Flick to kick indeed.

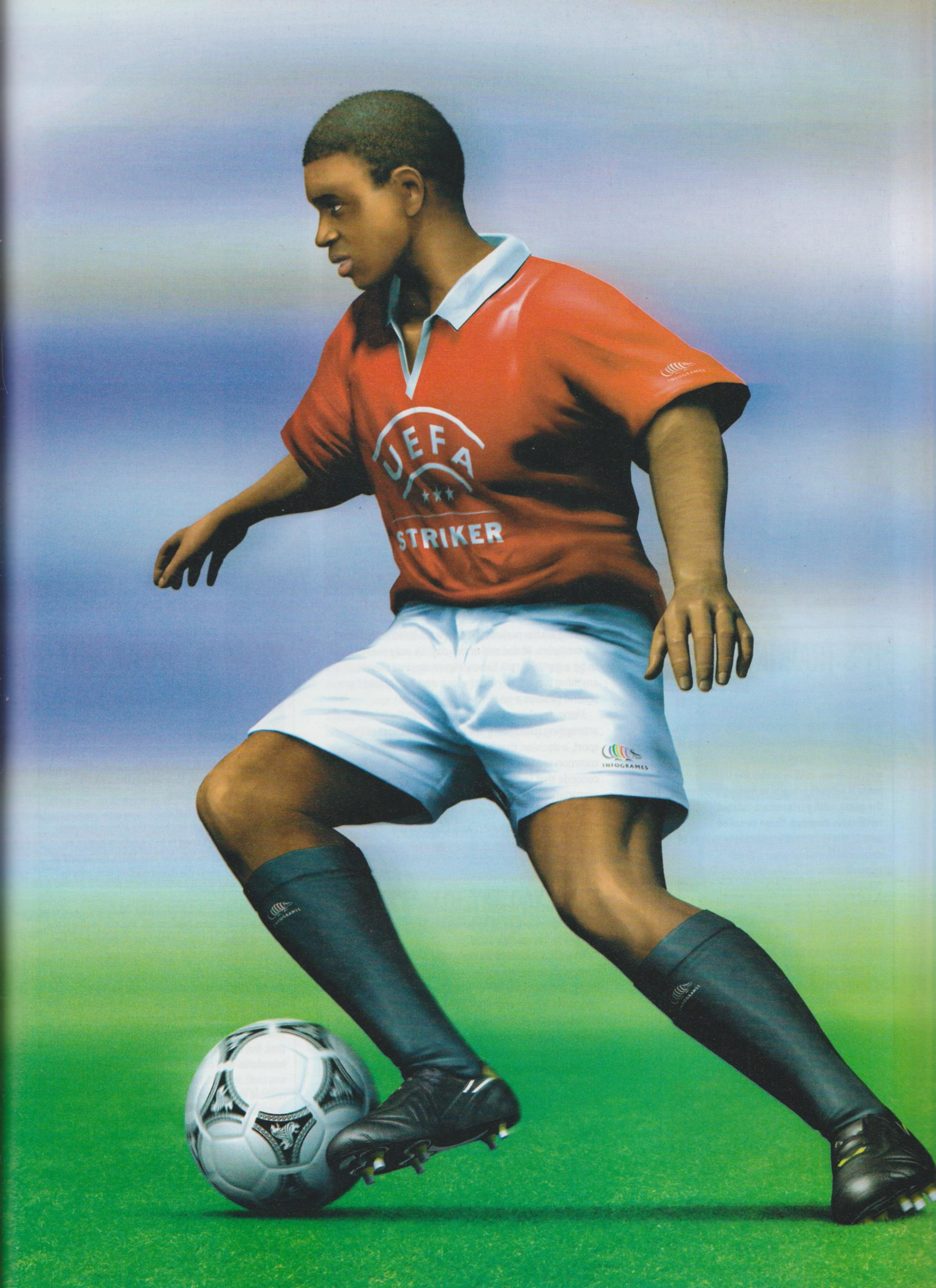
So why the enduring preoccupation with football? The simple answer is because it's great, and anyone who disagrees is wrong. More than that though, it's the perfect accoutrement for the armchair sportsman. Whereas hoofing a ball around Hackney Marshes of a Sunday morning has a vague appeal in a team-sports-male-bonding-flicking-each-other-with-wet-towels kind of way, any normal, right-thinking person will eschew the outside world in favour of a warm pad, a selection of pastry items and some cold drinks. The coward's option, admittedly, but as someone who once snapped both wrists within 30 seconds of taking to the field, an option that this reviewer will gladly take.

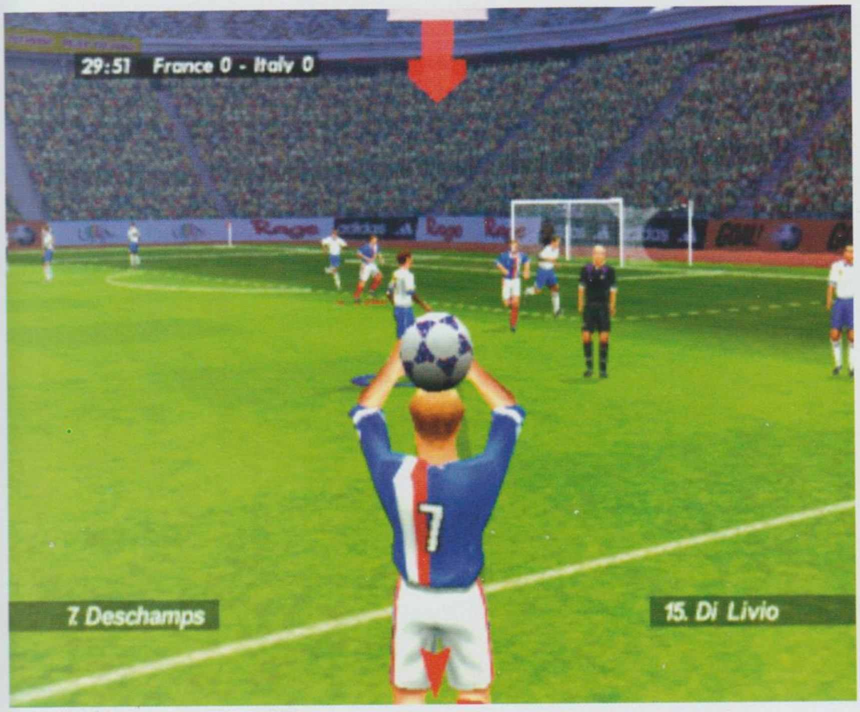
UNDER THE MOON

There are many factors that go towards developing a football game, and pinning down what makes a decent one is a slippery business. After all, you're essentially ▷

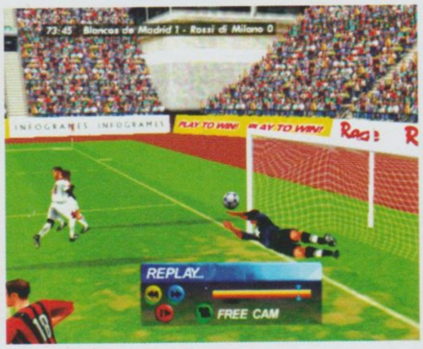


"THE BEST-LOOKING CONSOLE FOOTBALL GAME YET, AND A NIFTY LITTLE MOVER TO BOOT"

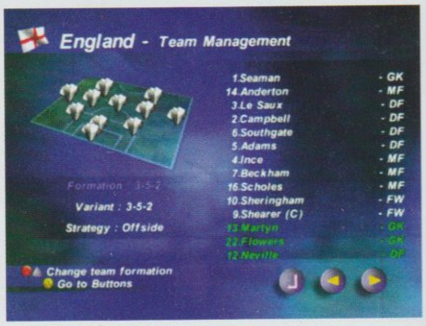

UEFA
STRIKER
INFOGRAMES



△ **Throw it, then.**



△ **Action replays let you get among it.**



England - Team Management

1.Seaman	- GK
14.Anderton	- MF
3.Le Saux	- DF
2.Campbell	- DF
6.Southgate	- DF
5.Adams	- DF
4.Ince	- MF
7.Beckham	- MF
16.Scholes	- MF
10.Sheringham	- FW
9.Shearer (C)	- FW
13 Martyn	- GK
22 Flowers	- GK
12 Neville	- DF

Formation : 3-5-2
Variant : 3-5-2
Strategy : Offside

Change team formation
Go to Buttons

△ **The team screen. Which, to be honest, is a bit skid.**

IT'S TRAINING MEN

You won't get far in this game by trying to run before you learn to walk

Most football games include a training option, but of course nobody uses them, preferring to dive in at the deep end and learn the hard way. However, in *UEFA Striker* the training mode is actually integral to making progress in the game, with performance-related certificates awarded. These so-called certificates then enable you to take charge of a national team and enter a vague approximation of the World Cup qualifiers, European qualifiers and next year's Euro 2000 finals.

The training itself is split into shooting, passing, defending, penalties, set pieces and free play. It's an original idea, and depending on your temperament is either a cunning way of forcing you to learn useful skills, or a patronising hindrance.

△ **The luxurious training camp.**

▷ working within parameters that have been established for centuries. At the end of the day, it's only ever going to be a game of two halves, eleven against eleven, anything can happen on the day, and it only takes a second to score a goal.

Many developers have gone down the road of attempting to faithfully simulate every aspect of the sport, a decision that is not necessarily a victory for common sense. Even the keenest of footie fans will concede that large parts of a football match can be excruciatingly dull: a witless charade of misplaced passes; woeful ball control; inept goalkeepers; and pitiful finishing. It is often only blind loyalty, the perceived importance of the occasion and the anticipation of a goal – not to mention fear of concession – that make football the nail-biting spectacle it is. The same can't be said about a mere videogame, and nobody wants to pay 40 quid for the digital equivalent of Chester versus Mansfield. Or if they do they're completely mad.

There is a school of thought that suggests a football game should be the equivalent of edited highlights; that is, a constant flurry of goals, saves, near misses and silky skills. By this criterion alone, *UEFA Striker* is a winner. Firmly entrenched in the arcade camp, the action is relentless from the off and continues at a breathless pace until the final whistle. Passes are sprayed around with arrogance, balls are whipped into the box with unerring precision, often to be clinically dispatched with aplomb.

Loathe as we are to admit it, stringing a few moves together in *UEFA Striker* is the equivalent of watching Manchester United at their most irresistible: for every searching Scholes ball, there's a Beckham to instantly trap it and deliver an immaculate cross onto the head of a perfectly positioned Yorke. It's exhibition stuff.

SPEAK OUT

WE TALK TO **FEARGUS CARROLL**, SENIOR PRODUCER ON *UEFA STRIKER*

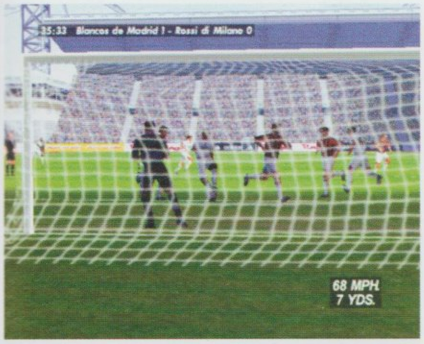
WHAT ARE THE MAIN INSPIRATIONS BEHIND THE GAME?
Jumpers for goalposts, 15-a-side, in the park after tea… It's a beautiful game.

WHO IS THE GAME AIMED AT?
Anyone whose jumper has been the aforementioned goalpost. You don't need to be a hardcore gamer, or even understand the off-side rule. That's the beauty of it. *UEFA Striker* obeys the classic gaming rule: easy to play, difficult to master.

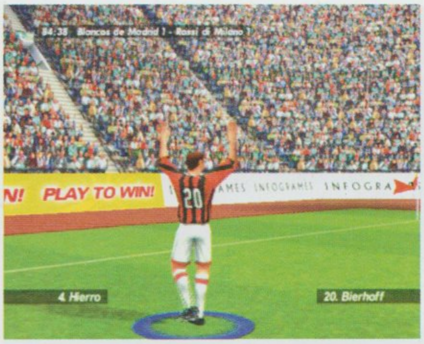
WHAT'S THE SINGLE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
The AI will take some beating. Oh, and the engine is the best out there. And it's got the best 46 club teams. And by the far the best, most intuitive training mode yet.

WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT DREAMCAST?
The industry has been waiting for the next big shakedown for over 12 months, and it's finally here. The whole industry has moved another step forward. Whether it's a leap or a tippy-toe will only be proven in time, but without companies pushing back the boundaries we'd still be playing *Pong* (and thinking it was cool). In short, I'm excited about the games to be released over the next couple of years, how far Dreamcast can be pushed, and how PSX2 and Dolphin programmers will respond.

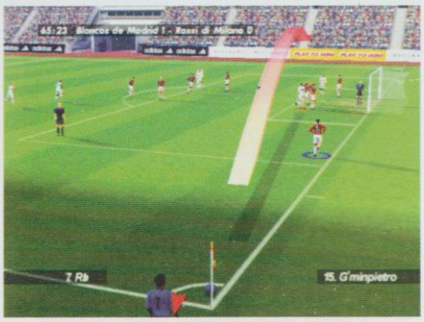
WHICH DREAMCAST GAMES ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO?
Apart from *UEFA*? *Crazy Taxi*, *Ready 2 Rumble*, *Expendable*, *NFL 2000*, *Outcast* and *Poko Piki* (import).


35:33 Blancos de Madrid 1 - Rossi di Milano 0
68 MPH.
7 YDS.

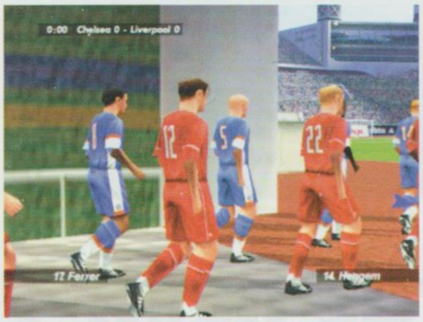
△ **Proper European-style nets and everything.**


84:38 Blancos de Madrid 1 - Rossi di Milano
PLAY TO WIN!
4. Hierro
20. Bierhoff

△ **"Celebrate… and have a good time…"**


65:23 Blancos de Madrid 1 - Rossi di Milano 0
7. Rb
15. G'minpietro

△ **As Bayern Munich know too well, corners can be dangerous.**


0:00 Chelsea 0 - Liverpool 0
17. Ferrer
14. Heggem

△ **"Come on, lads, we can have this lot! They're muck!"**

PASS AND SHOOT

So how have they went and gone and done that? It's quite simple, really. The pass button passes, usually to feet, and the shoot button shoots, usually on target. Other than that, there's a sprint, a pseudo through ball and a lofted punt. There's also a mildly innovative trap function which positions the receiving player directly in the path of the incoming ball and enables him to bring it under control immediately, regardless of the pace or angle of approach.

What this means is that, during build-up play at least, there are very few stray balls and, in theory at least, it's possible to maintain possession, hence the end-to-end action. The tackling is less precise, and comprises either a foot-in or a David Batty-style slide. Timing is tricky, but as a rule of thumb, if you make the challenge from the front you generally come away with the ball or at least get something on it. And in accordance with UEFA jurisdiction, tackling from behind is strictly forbidden.

As for special moves, *UEFA Striker* doesn't have any. Not so much as a feint, a shimmy or a Beardsley shuffle. Which might be anathema to those weaned on the *FIFA* games and their ilk. That's not to say individual skill can't be utilised, just that it requires a certain amount of adroitness with the stick as opposed to manual dexterity on the buttons.

KEEPER'S BALL!

Goalkeepers are clearly crucial in both real and pretend football, and those in *UEFA Striker* tend to ignore the conventional wisdom of narrowing the angle, preferring to stay on their line even in a one-on-one situation. However, by way of compensation they're blessed with cat-like reflexes and are able to palm the ball away from the most improbable of positions, which leads to a lot of corners and the occasional goal mouth scramble.

As for the commentary, Jonathan Pearce's over-the-top histrionics are well-suited to the frantic action on the field, and he's joined by Ruud Gullit and Big Fat Ronald Bo Jangles Atkinson.

That's your *UEFA Striker*, then, the best-looking console football game yet, and a nifty little mover to boot. Every system needs a decent football game, and Dreamcast has scored on its debut

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
DEVELOPER: **RAGE**

VERDICT

AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE BOY DONE GOOD

UPPERS
Easy to get to grips with • Flowing action • Real player names • Excellent replay mode

DOWNERS
Dubious use of licence • Some made-up club names • 12 substitutes per game • Tedious front end

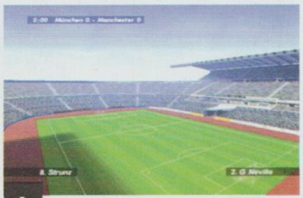
IN ONE HOUR We were racking up eight goal victories, albeit against a hapless Infogrames employee
WEBSITE www.rage.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz option

SCORE 8/10

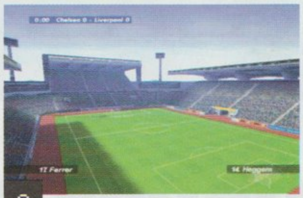
WALKTHROUGH

AROUND THE GROUNDS

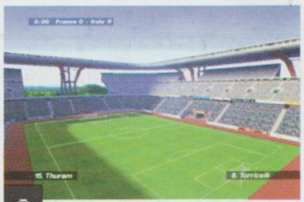
UEFA Striker features five different stadiums, all based on actual venues, although the names have been changed


0:00 München 0 - Manchester 0
8. Strunz
2. G. Neville

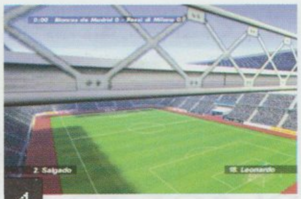
1 Stade de Lyon is guaranteed to stir memories of last year's World Cup.


0:00 Chelsea 0 - Liverpool 0
17. Ferrer
14. Heggem

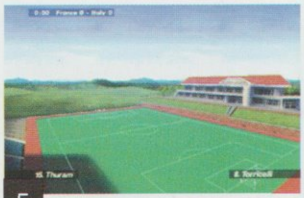
2 Kiev Stadium is a curious choice, although few will question its authenticity.


0:00 France 0 - Italy 0
15. Thuram
8. Torricelli

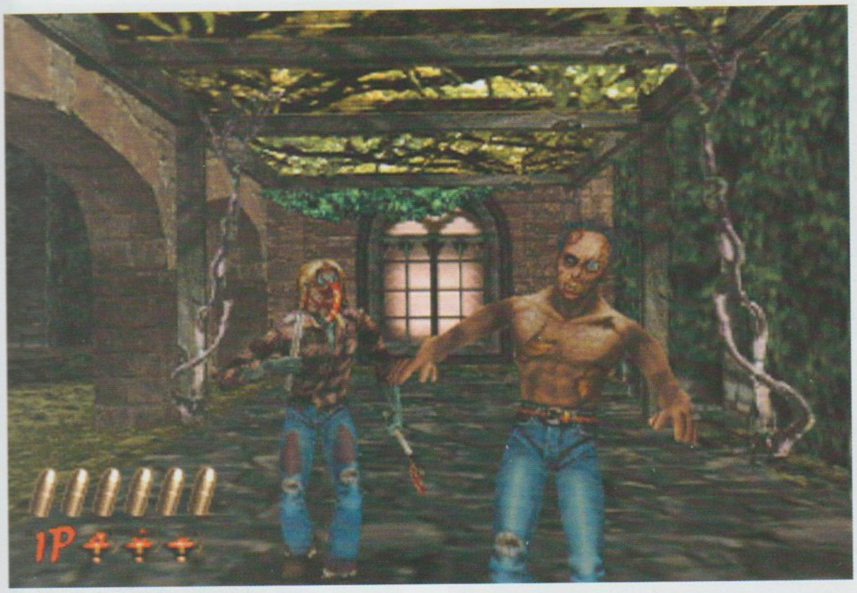
3 Stadio Roma is the scene of England's glorious qualification for France 98.


0:00 Blancos de Madrid 0 - Rossi di Milano 0
2. Salgado
18. Leonardo

4 Estadio de Madrid is perhaps better known as the Bernebeu and is home to Real.

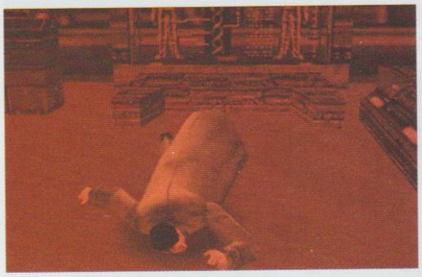

0:00 France 0 - Italy 0
15. Thuram
8. Torricelli

5 Birmingham's stadium was, er, under construction in our review copy. Nice fields though.



△ Don't just stand there, shoot 'em.

△ Shoot the little fella to get to the big 'un.



△ Oh dear. Too slow. Time for another go, then.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

This non-stop gore-fest will turn you into a light-gun-wielding maniac in no time at all. **DAN TRENT** is the maniac with the aching trigger finger

> "THE GREATEST SINGLE REASON FOR BUYING THIS GAME IS THAT IT'S ONE HELL OF A BLAST TO PLAY"

BANG… SQUELCH. BANG BANG… squelch, splatter… Five seconds into the game and the zombies have got their putrid claws into you and you've been dragged into a world of rotting flesh, murderous leaping turds, and truly terrible acting. Try to escape if you want, but it won't do you any good – the undead have worked their vile magic and you're hooked.

While the rest of the horror gaming world froths about cinematic lighting effects and involved plotlines, the developers of *House Of The Dead 2* have taken a very simple route. The coin-op versions of the game have been a huge success, and the translation to Dreamcast has followed the same refreshingly basic formula: zombies appear in front of you. You shoot them. More zombies appear. You shoot them too. It's simple, it's fun, and there's no need to justify your enjoyment of blowing things away with a big gun cos, hey, they're already dead!

BRING IT ON HOME

While the game itself is nothing new – it's long been a favourite in pubs and arcades across the country – the fact that Dreamcast can now bring the same visceral fun into the living room means it can be enjoyed at any time and long after the pound coins would have run out. Indeed, the price of the game and light-guns is not far off what some fans would pump into a machine in one session, and many would be happy buying a Dreamcast on the strength of this game alone.

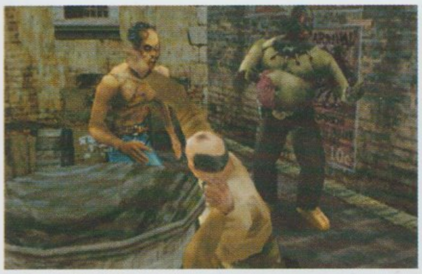
One of the reasons *HOTD* has been so popular is the truly sociable nature of its design. It's one of the few games that's actually *better* played with a companion than alone, as it encourages you to work together towards a common goal. As gaming attempts to shed the solitary geek stereotype, this is an important step.

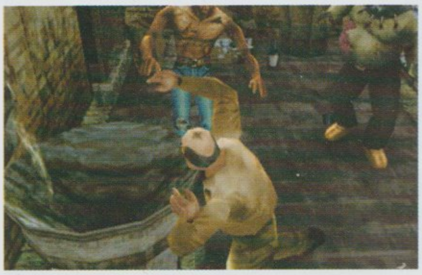
While the basic aim of the game doesn't require a great deal of explanation, there are several additional aspects of the Dreamcast version which add to the depth and longevity. Select original mode, and in addition to shooting zombies you can blast away at barrels, boxes and all manner of street furniture to gain power-ups for your next game. Some are welcome (larger clips and extra lives, for instance) while others (like the fresh meat or civilian clothes options) are less useful but undeniably fun. Weapons upgrades are also available, with machine-guns, 'special' air-guns and napalm guns all up for grabs if you know where to look. When it comes to power-ups, the simplest rule is to shoot everything – it may well murder your hit percentage, but you'll be glad in the end.

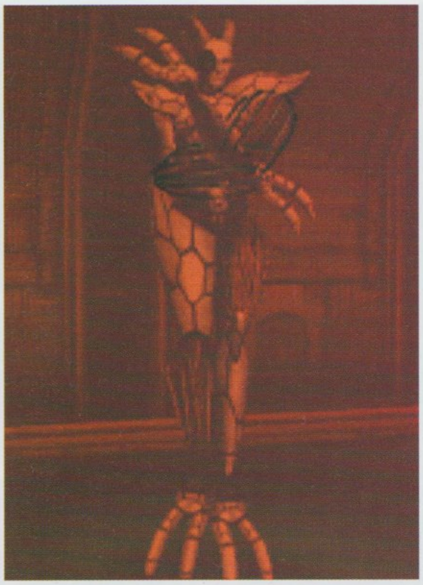
CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

Training and boss modes give you the chance to hone your six-shootin' skills, and are a valid mini-game in their own right. Defeat the boss in record time and you could be up there on the high-score board; and it helps you when you meet him in the game proper. The training mode also unlocks more goodies should you make it through with a perfect score, but you need to practice in order to achieve it.

This gushing praise is all very well, you might say, but what about the extra cash outlay needed for the light-guns? This is a valid point, as while the game can be played at a slightly more pedestrian pace with the conventional joypad, it only truly comes alive with a gun, and if you want to make the absolute most of it you're gonna need a pair of them. The bundled price of the game and single light-gun is certainly reasonable and makes the pill easier to swallow but you're still looking at a fair outlay for a single game if you go the whole hog.


△ Some of the civilians are just so annoying...


△ ...that you'll leave 'em to the zombies.


△ Remember him? The magician from *HOTD* returns for a re-match.

SPEAK OUT

SEGA'S **MATT O'DRISCOLL** GIVES US THE LOW-DOWN ON *HOUSE OF THE DEAD*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?

Killing all those mean and nasty zombie; all the extras that have been added over the arcade version – these include Original mode, Training mode (which is really cool), Boss mode and rankings; the speed and excitement of the game; and of course saving the world (again).

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT DREAMCAST?

That question again. If I had a pound for every time I've been asked that I'd have three pounds. And again I'd have to say to the whole package, from the Internet access to its awesome power. It is very exciting – just look at the sales in the US so far!

WHAT'S THE BEST THING YOU'VE SEEN FROM OTHER DEVELOPERS?

Well, just recently I've seen a game from the Tokyo game show called *Jet Set Radio* (I think that's the name). Anyway, it's a very stylised cartoon skating game and it looks like great fun. However, I'm yet to play it. Other than that I'm looking forward to *Soul Calibur*, *Ready 2 Rumble* and *Space Channel 5*.

Critics have also singled out the limited nature of the gameplay as a reason for marking the game down. While this is valid up to a point, there's much in the game to retain interest. Those familiar with it will be aware of the various routes you can take through the levels; for the uninitiated, these are usually triggered by which civilians you're quick enough to save and which end up as zombie fodder. The original mode, with its power-ups and bonuses, is also a welcome addition, as are training and boss modes, all of which add much-needed longevity.

When all's said and done, the greatest single reason for buying this game is that it's one hell of a blast to play. Sure, it has its limitations, but they're firmly pushed to the back of your mind as you raise your gun for the umpteenth time, determined to get a clean score, get that bonus, defeat that boss or complete it at the next skill level. Even when you've exhausted all the options you'll be back for more.

PRICE: **£39.99**
(£54.99 with one gun)
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **AM 1**

VERDICT

GORY AND HUGELY ENJOYABLE, BUY IT IF YOU CAN AFFORD THE GUNS

UPPERS
Dead easy to get into • Fast-moving • Even better in two-player • Additional features over coin-op

DOWNERS
A different game without the light-guns... • And subsequent extra expense • Horrific dialogue

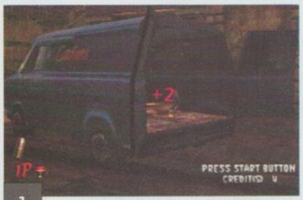
IN ONE HOUR Our fingers were hurting
WEBSITE www.dreamcast-europe.com
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz

SCORE 9/10

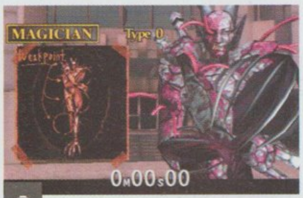
WALKTHROUGH

A BIGGER HOUSE

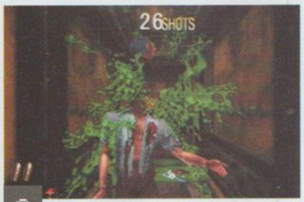
The expanded version of the game contains a host of extras over the coin-op version. Here's what to expect...



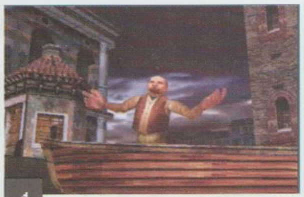
1 Power-ups are hidden in all kinds of places, but you've got to be quick to get them.



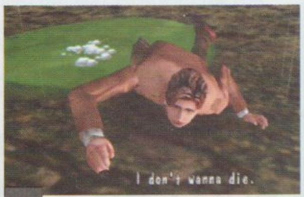
2 The Boss training level enables you to practice against the clock. Speed is of the essence if you're gonna catch him.



3 Training mode hones those skills, as well as setting some challenging mini-missions.



4 Eat fresh meat and gain huge hands! Just don't ask why.



5 Bad dialogue has also been faithfully carried over from the coin-op version.

SEGA BASS FISHING

It's Dreamcast's first hook 'em up, but will it reel in the gamers?

STUART DREDGE casts around for some more crap fishing puns

AS FESTIVALS GO, it's fair to say that Party In The Park isn't one of the most credible. Each year, 100,000 sunburnt Capital Radio listeners gather in Hyde Park to watch a motley assortment of boy bands, ex-Spice Girls, ex-soap stars and the like. Good fun if you like your pop, but the rest of us would probably rather boil our toes in bubbling acid.

Yet we owe this year's event a debt. Sega apparently weren't planning a UK release for their *Get Bass* game, but a storming celebrity challenge backstage at Party In The Park convinced them otherwise. It seems we should be thanking the likes of Patsy Palmer and Boyzone for the release of the renamed *Sega Bass Fishing*. True, it doesn't make up for Ronan's solo single, but it's a start.

WIDE ANGLER

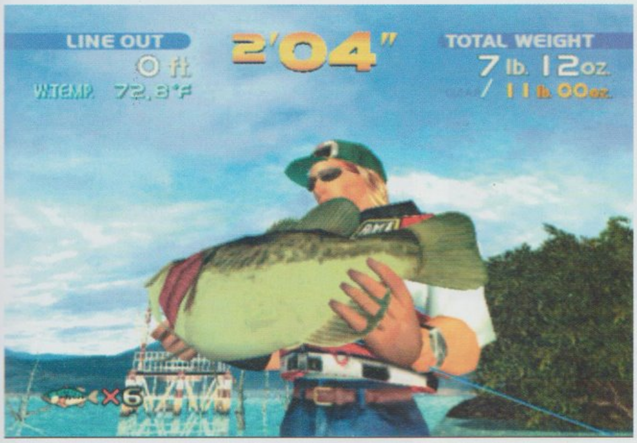
Get Bass started as an arcade game, complete with a proper fishing rod which you used to haul in your prey. Obviously you can't hook up a length of actual line to your Dreamcast, but Sega have provided a special rod controller, complete with a 'G Sensor' to detect your movements, and an in-built vibration unit (see Feel The Strain panel on page 90).

The aim of the game is to defeat the evil Thromulan empire by racing on your hoverpod and destroying… No, no, it's not. The aim of the game, as you'd expect, is to catch fish. You choose your bait, cast your line, hook the fish and reel it in. It's everything you'd expect of a fishing game, but compared to most other console games that's pretty damned original.

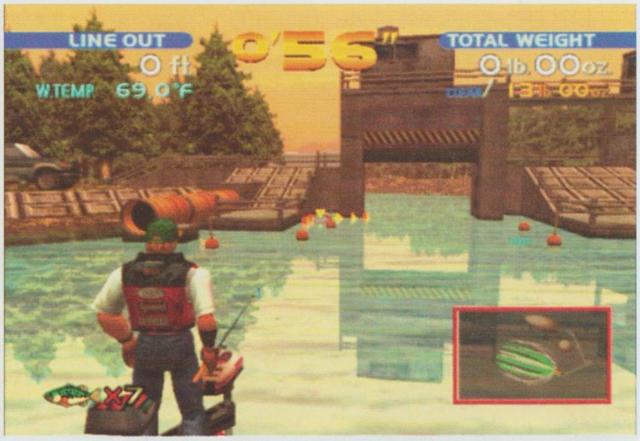
There are three modes of play. Practice enables you to master the controls and try out the different baits, with a lake of fish just begging to take a mouthful of your hook. Arcade mode requires you to catch a certain weight of fish in strict time limits, including bonus levels where you try to catch a super-bass. Finally, there's Original

> "EVEN IF YOU PREFER YOUR FISH BATTERED, YOU CAN STILL ENJOY *SBF*"

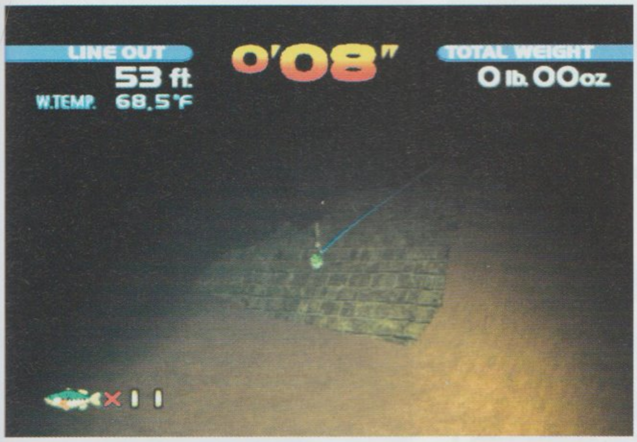
Turn the rod rig



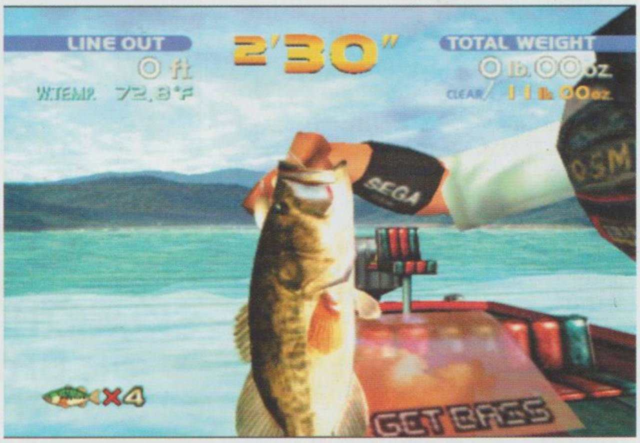
△ It won't be long before you too could be landing monster-sized bass like this one.



△ This power station level is surprisingly lacking in three-eyed fish.



△ The dark depths are where you'll find the biggest fish.



△ The fish realised that further struggle was futile.

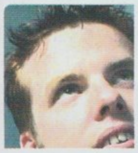
mode, which has you as an amateur angler competing in tournaments which will enable you to make your way up through the ranks to become a professional, and ultimately the champion.

REEL LIFE

So, who wants to play a fishing game? More people than you might think, despite the fact that bass fishing isn't one of the UK's premier sports. And even if you prefer your fish battered with a side order of chips, you can still have fun with *Sega Bass Fishing*. Although there is a fair amount of strategy involved, the game is more like an arcade representation of what fishing would be like if it was exciting.

It's also an easy game to get into. In the Practice and Arcade modes, there are plenty of fish around, so you quickly work out what needs to be done to reel them in. It's a frenetic process. Once the fish is hooked, you bust your wrist winding the reel like mad, watching carefully to make sure the line's not too tight; when it is, you have to give the bass some slack before hauling it in again. Eventually you lift your catch out of the water and check how big it is.

It sounds like a measured process, but it's not. In reality you end up hammering the fishing rod like a loon, shouting at the screen and swearing whenever the fish threatens to break the line. The rod's G Sensor really adds to the frenetic atmosphere, letting you physically haul in your catch. The pride when you land a 17-pound whopper is equalled only by the utter rage when you bust a gut to bring in something the size of a goldfish. ▷



SPEAK OUT

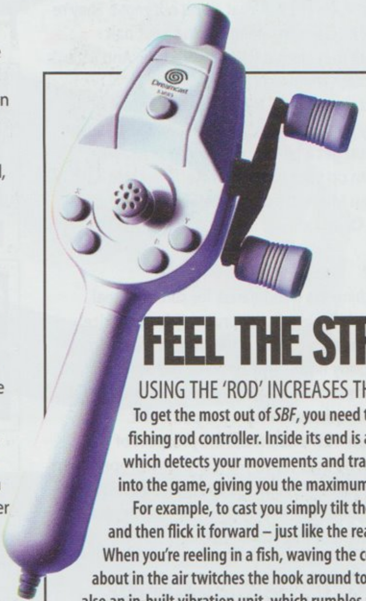
WE HOOK UP WITH **MATT O'DRISCOLL**, PRODUCER FOR THE PAL VERSION OF *SEGA BASS FISHING*

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT THE GAME?
It's an arcade-perfect conversion, but there's also loads of extras to keep you amused for hours. Also, there's no better feeling than pulling in a big one!

WHAT'S THE MOST EXCITING ASPECT OF DREAMCAST?
Everything. It's great to hear developers saying that it's a great machine to develop for. We're expecting bigger and better things.

WHAT'S THE BEST GAME YOU'VE SEEN FROM ANOTHER DEVELOPER?
At present it has to be *Soul Calibur*. It's a beauty.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST CATCH IN THE GAME?
A couple of birds down the Old Kent Road.

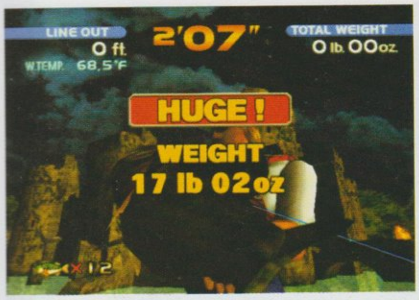


FEEL THE STRAIN

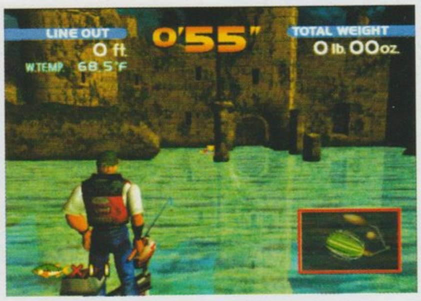
USING THE 'ROD' INCREASES THE FUN

To get the most out of *SBF*, you need to use the fishing rod controller. Inside its end is a 'G Sensor', which detects your movements and translates them into the game, giving you the maximum control.

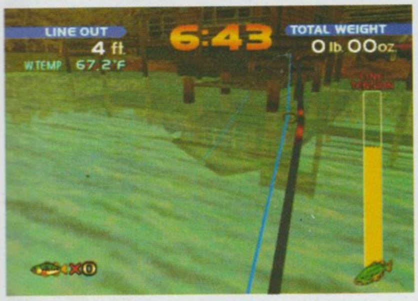
For example, to cast you simply tilt the rod back and then flick it forward – just like the real thing. When you're reeling in a fish, waving the controller about in the air twitches the hook around too. There's also an in-built vibration unit, which rumbles away when you're hauling in a big 'un.


LINE OUT
0 ft
W.TEMP 68.5°F
2'07"
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz
HUGE !
WEIGHT
17 lb 02oz
×1 2

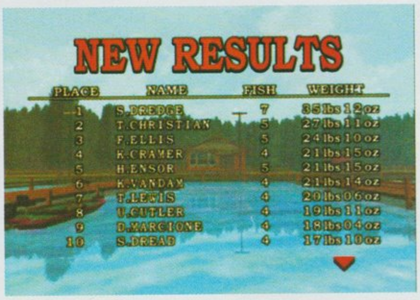
△ It might not be huge, but it's a start


LINE OUT
0 ft
W.TEMP 68.5°F
0'55"
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz

△ The secret Palace level sees you hunting for super-bass.


LINE OUT
4 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
6:43
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz
×0

△ Reel it in!


NEW RESULTS

PLACE	NAME	FISH	WEIGHT
1	S.DREDGE	7	35 lbs 12 oz
2	T.CHRISTIAN	5	27 lbs 11 oz
3	F.ELLIS	5	24 lbs 10 oz
4	K.CRAMER	4	21 lbs 15 oz
5	H.ENSOR	5	21 lbs 15 oz
6	K.VANDAM	4	21 lbs 14 oz
7	T.LEWIS	4	20 lbs 06 oz
8	U.CUTLER	4	19 lbs 11 oz
9	D.MARCIONE	4	18 lbs 04 oz
10	S.DREAD	4	17 lbs 10 oz

△ Compare your fishy exploits in the Original mode..

BASS IN THE PLACE

Although the game's easy to get into, one criticism is that it takes a while to really feel like you know what you're doing. You can be flailing about miserably without knowing what you're doing wrong; or you can hit a real hot streak seemingly by luck. The real depth to *SBF* comes from playing the Original mode, but it can be so infuriating that many players may prefer the faster-paced Arcade mode instead.

In terms of graphics, *SBF* is pretty attractive though not awe-inspiring. Although the different lakes are all nicely rendered, it's the fish that stand out most. They're grumpy little buggers, skulking around your bait morosely until they decide they fancy a bite. And it's a pleasure to catch them.

The sound, meanwhile, is another story. Most of the time it's fairly watery ambient stuff. However, once you hook a fish you get a blast of godawful cock rawk, presumably to up your adrenalin level. How bad is it? Imagine Bryan May attempting the *Saved By The Bell* theme tune. Ouch indeed.

HOOK IT UP

Sega Bass Fishing is a good game, for sure. The real problem for many people will probably be the price. You can play using a joypad rather than a 'fishing rod', but that's slightly fiddly, and certainly not as much fun. From reactions in the office, it seems that some people love *SBF*, while others can't see the point of it.

You're faced with a dilemma: the prospect of splashing out 60 quid if you want to play it properly, but until you've played it you won't know if you even like it. It's a decent game, but never has the idea of try before you buy been more important.

PRICE: **£59.99 (including rod)**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**

> "THEY'RE GRUMPY LITTLE BUGGERS, SKULKING AROUND YOUR BAIT MOROSELY UNTIL THEY DECIDE THEY FANCY A BITE"

VERDICT

KNOCKABOUT FUN, WORTH A LOOK EVEN IF YOU DON'T LIKE FISHING

UPPERS
Hectic action • Quickly becomes addictive • There's nothing else like it

DOWNERS
Can be frustrating at times • Lack of long-term appeal

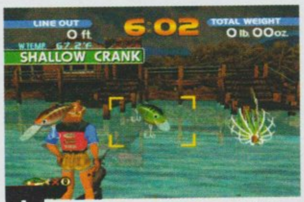
IN ONE HOUR We'd just caught our first 17lb monster, although most of our time had been spent landing tiddlers
WEBSITE www.dreamcast-europe.com
CHECK OUT www.4bass.com for real-life bass fishing tips
MAX PLAYERS One
60Hz/VGA MODES No/Yes

SCORE 7/10

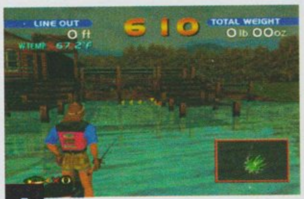
WALKTHROUGH

SETTING THE SCENE

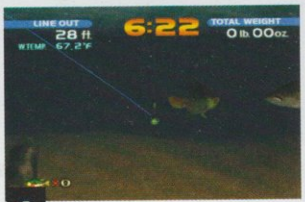
SBF takes the boredom out of fishing. Once you cast and get started, it won't be long before you catch your first fish


LINE OUT
0 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
6:02
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz
SHALLOW CRANK

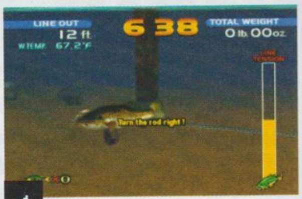
1 Choosing the right bait is essential if you want the fish to come flocking.


LINE OUT
0 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
6 10
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz

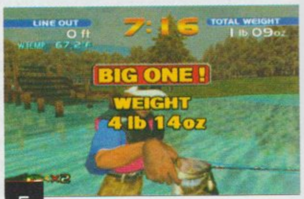
2 Next you need to choose where to cast your line, judging which areas are teeming with the most fish.


LINE OUT
28 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
6:22
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz

3 Slowly reel in your line, wiggling it about to make sure you catch the attention of any passing fish.


LINE OUT
12 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
6 38
TOTAL WEIGHT
0 lb 00oz
Turn the rod right!

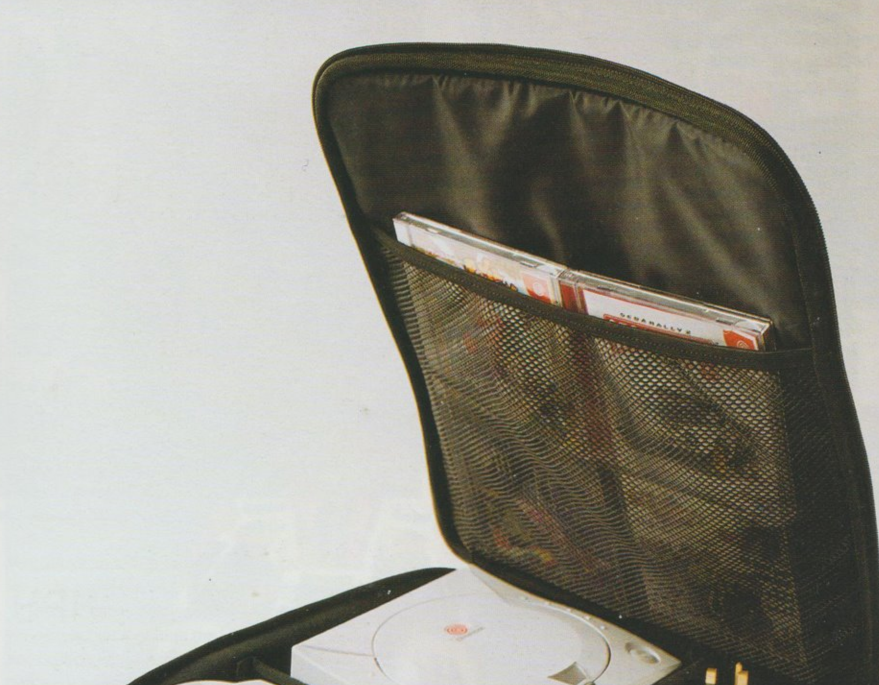
4 Once the bait has been taken, reel like mad on the fishing controller, pausing whenever the line looks like breaking.


LINE OUT
0 ft
W.TEMP 67.2°F
7:16
TOTAL WEIGHT
1 lb 09oz
BIG ONE !
WEIGHT
4 lb 14oz

5 Reap the rewards by savouring your hefty catch. Or not, as is often the case at first

Dreamcast™

Games Console Carry Bag



This heavily padded, reinforced, water resistant, *lockable Games Console Carry Bag will safely store the Dreamcast Console, two Dreamcast Controllers, all the leads and several games. It has a detatchable shoulder strap and a carry handle for ease of transportation and adjustable inner compartments.

*Padlock not included. (Console Controllers, Leads & Games not included.)

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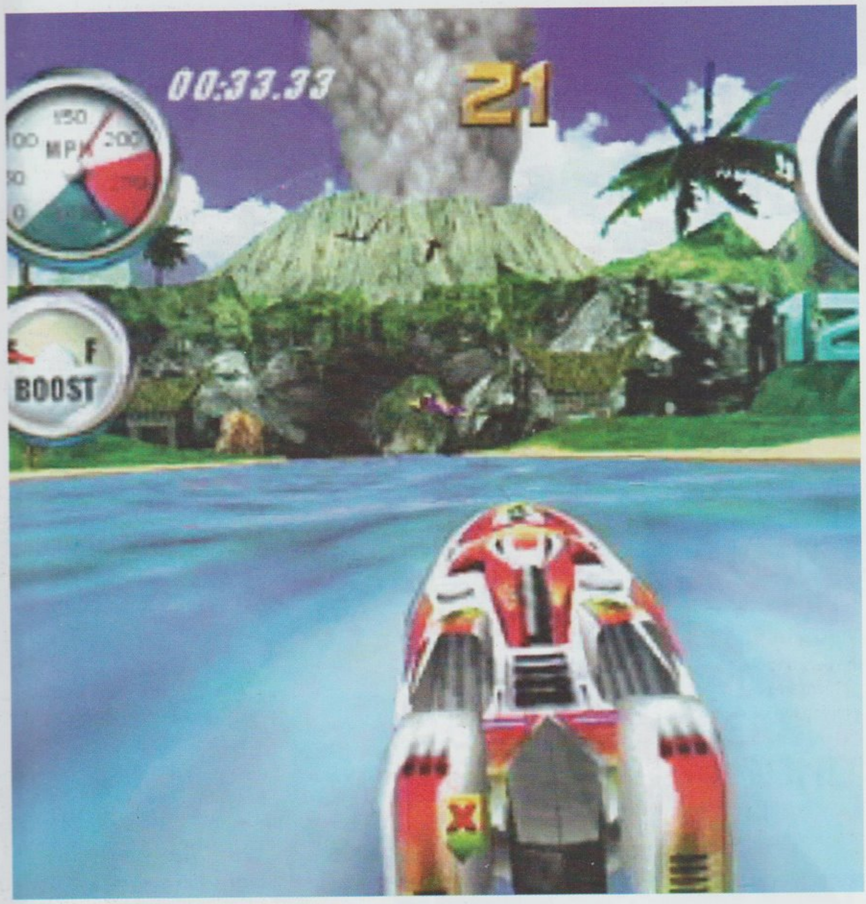


△ The Lost island track features waterfalls, primitive huts and an enormous volcano.

01:56.46
99
BOOST
8 OF 16

△ Getting airborne is essential if you're going to win.

00:14.26
15
BOOST
13 OF 16

△ Early in the race, jockeying for position.

00:46.66
32
12 OF 16
OLD TIME
03.45.66
YOUR TIME

△ The opposition take some beating.

HYDRO THUNDER

You can't beat messing about in boats. **STUART DREDGE** dons his life jacket and takes to the water

ON THE CD

THERE ARE PLENTY OF RACING GAMES launching with Dreamcast, each with their own niche. *Hydro Thunder*'s is that it's the only one with boats. Super-fast speedboats, to be precise. The idea is simple but effective: pick a boat, then a track, and race round it, competing against 15 rivals.

That's not the whole story, naturally. Sprinkled around each track are turbo boosts to collect, which give you a burst of speed and enable you to jump out of the water. Collecting the boosts is vital if you're to finish high enough in the rankings to get to the harder courses.

They're worth getting to, as well. *Hydro Thunder* features some beautiful courses set in locations all around the world. The three easy tracks are set in a theme park, a lost island and an arctic setting, but other tracks have themes such as Ancient Greece, the Far East, the canals of Venice and a spooky Ship's Graveyard. And they all look sumptuous.

Every level has a set of 'secrets' – short cuts that enable you to sneak ahead of the competition and grab a few extra boosts. These tend to be concealed within the landscape – behind waterfalls or through holes in cliffs, for example – and discovering them is essential if you're to progress.

Speed-wise, *Hydro Thunder* is a strange game. Sometimes it's blisteringly fast, but at other times it seems a bit slow, which is off-putting. The two-player split-screen mode is fun, but if only one of you knows the secrets then the other person has got no chance.

Despite these flaws, *Hydro Thunder* is still a fairly good game, and the flashy visuals will certainly show off your Dreamcast. It's just a shame that a couple of frustrating aspects have prevented it from being closer to a launch-day classic. ⊖

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**

VERDICT

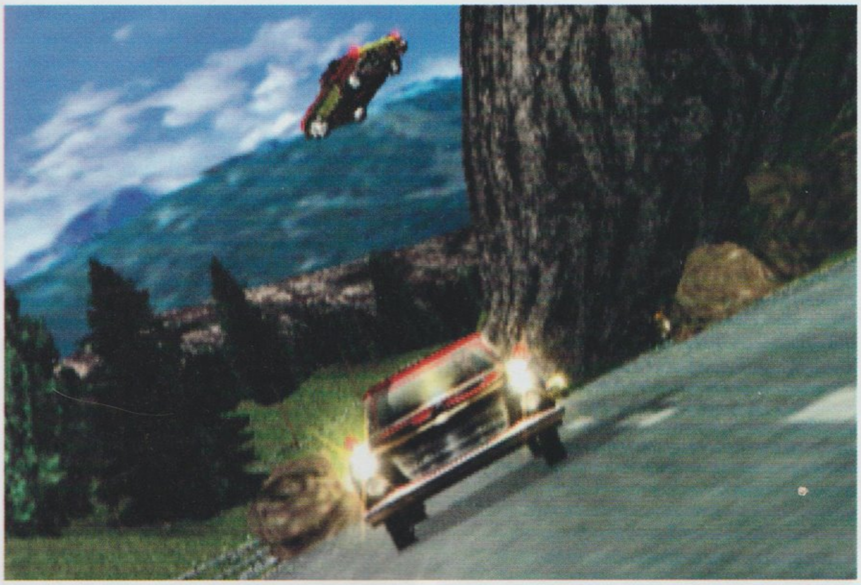
NOVEL RACING GAME THAT DOESN'T QUITE HIT THE SPOT

UPPERS
Easy-to-master controls • Makes a change from cars • Sumptuous courses in beautiful locations

DOWNERS
Doesn't always feel fast enough • Need to learn secrets to succeed

IN ONE HOUR We were stuck on the Arctic level
WEBSITE www.midway.com
CHECK OUT http://madgear.edition.net/hydrothunder/
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz

SCORE 6/10



△ **Despite his clever disguise to get round the race ban, Superman was soon spotted.**

SPEED DEVILS

What speed was **STEVE OWEN** doing? He has no idea, as his eyes stopped working when he applied the Nitro Boost

DESPITE THE SLIGHTLY CORNY NAME, *Speed Devils* is actually packed full of originality. Okay, it's a driving game, and that's hardly original in console land, but Ubi Soft have taken their bags of imagination and unpacked them onto the CD pressing plants.

It's not so much a walk in the park as a drive through the countryside as some of the driving genre's finest tracks whiz by at a satisfyingly swift 30 frames a second: from dusty roads, to the film sets of Hollywood and the snowy mountain villages of Aspen, and the Aztec lava ruins of Mexico. Each track is not only exceptionally long (around two to three minutes per lap, even though you're regularly at top speed), but also extremely varied and generally beautiful. Huge set pieces spew surprises: a hang-glider pilot whoops over your head; three Red Arrows obscure the distance with coloured vapour; a UFO crashes onto the road.

It's not just the looks that maketh the game, there are a number of involving challenge modes too, in the style of PlayStation's *Gran Turismo*. With a basic car and no cash, you need to win races, spending your winnings on a new vehicle or upgrades for your existing wheels. When you think you've got a fast enough car and have earned enough points from your league, you can then proceed to the next championship, and the greater rewards, tougher challenges and new tracks or track variations available there.

Of particular interest is the betting mode, where the other drivers challenge you to achieve certain tasks in the next race. You might even lose your car in a Vengeance match. Unfortunately you can't initiate any of the bets, and this is an unfortunate oversight.

There are plenty of ways of earning money, such as winning the race, getting the top speed, the fastest lap, and busting speed traps. At three points in a lap the police are waiting to check your speed; beat a set time for that spot and you get bonus cash.

With varied tracks, a two-player split-screen mode and arcade checkpoint racing, *Speed Devils* has plenty going for it. Our only reservation is that it's perhaps slightly too easy.

PRICE: **£40**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT**

VERDICT

SURPRISINGLY ENJOYABLE – A SATISFYING AND VARIED RACER

UPPERS
Very good-looking • Lots of variety • Long, attractive tracks

DOWNERS
A bit slow to get started • Unrealistic • Simple to master

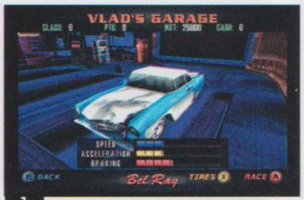
IN ONE HOUR We got 42,000 points and mistakenly moved up a league. You should spend the money on car improvements before promotion.
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.co.uk
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz

SCORE 7/10

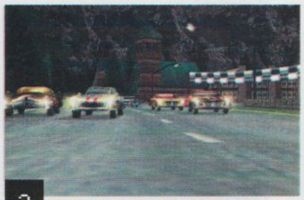
DRIVETHROUGH

CASH UP FRONT

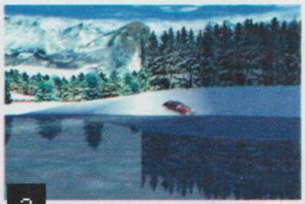
Being taken seriously involves qualifying for the advanced leagues, but you need to earn cash with the simpletons first



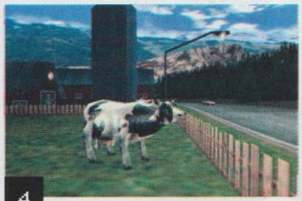
1 ▽ **Your sponsor trusts you with nothing better than a beaten up old jallopy at first. You can't even afford to repair it.**



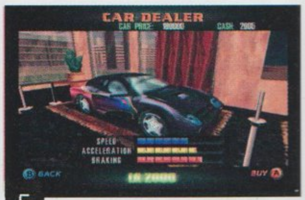
2 ▽ **It's just a free-for-all after the race start. If you avoid everyone else's tussles you can probably make it to the front.**



3 ▽ **Make use of short cuts to jump ahead of the pack. And practice going fast through the radar traps for extra dosh.**



4 ▽ **Remember that the world carries on around you. Behind the cow there could be workmen digging up the road.**

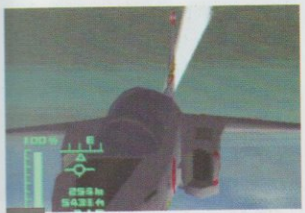


5 ▷ **Eventually, with enough cash you can buy your dream car. It's the only way to succeed in the A-league of drivers.**

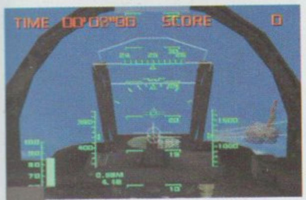
FLYTHROUGH

UP, UP AND AWAY...

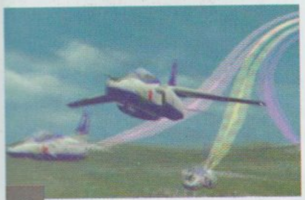
With no shooting to worry about, you can spend your time learning how to manoeuvre, then just enjoy the view



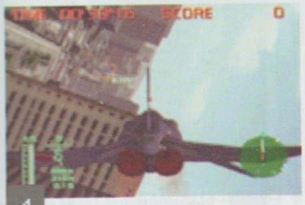
1 Solo manoeuvres, like the loop seen here, are relatively straightforward.



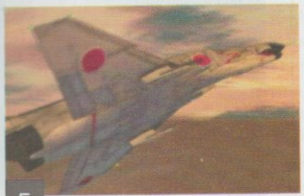
2 Doing the same in formation is another matter. I can feel another bollocking coming on…



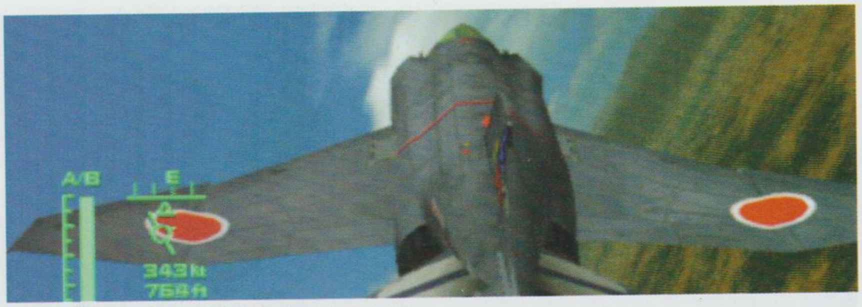
3 Smoke effects look nice and enable you to see the fruits of your labour.



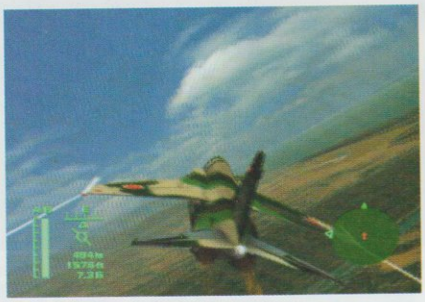
4 Buzz the penthouse dwellers as you race to the checkpoints in the Sky Mission Attack mode.



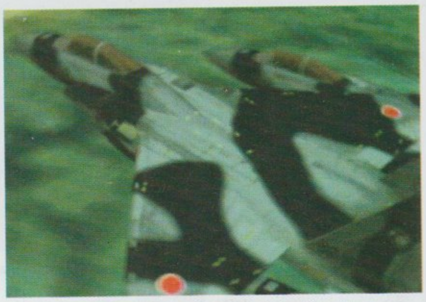
5 Mirror, signal… break into right barrel roll – go, go, go!



△ Brutal but fast, the Phantom isn't the first choice for aerobatics.



△ Cut loose in the Japanese Airforce's latest piece of hardware.



△ There's close formation, and then there's *close* formation.

AEROWINGS

A flight sim that doesn't involve shooting things? A sceptical **DAN TRENT** investigates

DURING THE FUEL CRISIS of the late '70s the Red Arrows apparently resorted to performing their displays on bicycles. While that *would* make an original basis for a computer game, *AeroWings*' more literal take on the world of formation aerobatics is an interesting spin on the otherwise well-represented genre.

AeroWings puts you in the hot seat with Blue Impulse, Japan's premier aerobatics squad who, despite sounding more like a personal hygiene product, are pretty handy at the old formation flying lark. Closer to Torville and Dean than to Top Gun, *AeroWings* relies on lush graphics and a deceptively simple concept of stunts, not guns, to emphasise the skilful side of flying.

The game is divided into two distinct modes, Blue Impulse Mission and Sky Mission Attack, plus a free-flight mode that enables you to practice all the moves you need in the game proper. This is just as well, as *AeroWings* is a tricky game to master. With a highly realistic and sensitive control system, the planes are fidgety and difficult to fly smoothly. It's just as well the game looks as good as it does, because you need to do a lot of flying around to get the hang of it.

In the Blue Impulse Mission mode the task is to successfully pull off a series of mini-challenges set by the Blue Impulse squadron leader. Succeed and you're rewarded with steadily more complex missions and a wider selection of planes. The Sky Mission Attack isn't as war-like as it sounds. Instead you must fly through a sequence of floating checkpoints and earn points in order to progress and win yet more hardware.

Beautifully realised and very smooth – even with the screen full of planes – *AeroWings* is a joy to behold. The question of whether the style is matched by the content is more difficult to answer. While it's laudable that the game rewards flying rather than fighting skills, many will fail to see the point of a flight sim in which you can't engage your more aggressive tendencies. Ultimately this is the game's failing. At times it feels like half of it is missing, leaving too little for the more casual gamer to get into.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **CRAVE**
DEVELOPER: **CRI**

VERDICT

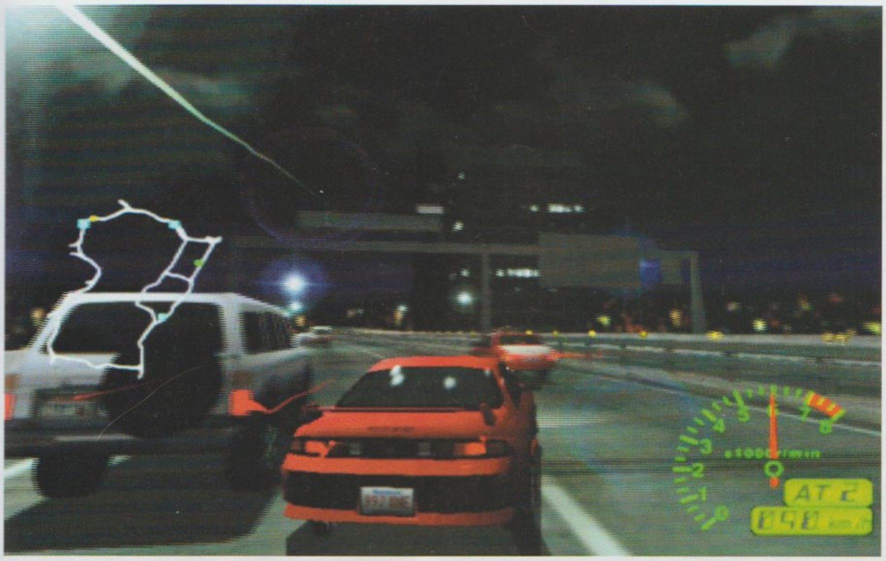
LOVELY TO LOOK AT, BUT ULTIMATELY ONE FOR AVIATION FANS ONLY

UPPERS
Smooth controls • Attention to detail • Satisfying when mastered • Strangely soothing

DOWNERS
Tricky to master • Little to attract the casual gamer • Limited gameplay • No side or rear view while playing

IN ONE HOUR We were still getting shouted at by our instructor
WEBSITE Under construction
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES N/A

SCORE 6/10



△ Choose a car, soup it up, then head out onto the streets for some action.

TOKYO HIGHWAY CHALLENGE

It's time to act like a wide boy and hit the streets of Tokyo. **DAN TRENT** is our man at the wheel

IF YOU'RE THE SORT OF PERSON WHO JUDGES A CAR'S worth by the size of its wings and the diameter of its exhaust, then *Tokyo Highway Challenge* is just the game for you. Making you free to indulge in all your wide-boy driving fantasies, the game enables you to cruise Tokyo's equivalent of the M25, looking for people to challenge in a race, with the winner collecting the cash and the loser left sobbing into his mock carbon fibre dashboard.

Starting out with 25,000 credits, you choose a car, visit the garage to soup it up, then get out onto the streets. The cars are beautifully detailed, and nice touches include the ability to alter the bodywork and paint job far beyond the realms of reasonable taste, as well as tweak the set-up of the engine and chassis. The lack of 'On A Mission' stickers and ridiculous stereos is a glaring omission considering the game's intended audience, and their inclusion would certainly have added interest to the proceedings.

While there's only one circuit, you can race it in either direction, and there are several options regarding which route you take, which, in addition to the suitably ponderous traffic, helps spice things up a bit. The cars handle reasonably well, although the controls do feel very mushy, and the amount of involvement you actually have regarding the course your car takes is debatable at times. There's a distinctly arcade feel to everything, which often limits the gameplay significantly, with no damage and distinctly underwhelming crashes. The structure of the game means you spend a lot of time aimlessly cruising around looking for people to challenge, which is tiresome but not as bad as the way you're obliged to sit through the replay whether you want to or not.

Sadly the game is seriously let down by its lack of depth, and handling quirks. While it looks great, there simply isn't enough there to maintain interest, and with eagerly anticipated titles like *Metropolis Street Racer* on the way, *Tokyo Highway Challenge* just doesn't cut it.

PRICE: **£39.99 (TBC)**
PUBLISHER: **GENKI**
DEVELOPER: **CRAVE ENTS**

VERDICT

GREAT-LOOKING, SOME NICE TOUCHES, BUT ULTIMATELY DEVOID OF GAMEPLAY

UPPERS
Lovely looking cars • Authentically gritty location • Promising concept

DOWNERS
Only one track • Disappointing handling and crashes • Lacking depth

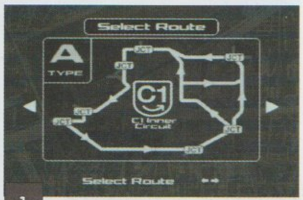
IN ONE HOUR We were playing *Ready 2 Rumble*
WEBSITE Under construction
CHECK OUT www.cheatcc.com for all the info you need to win
MAX PLAYERS Two
VIDEO MODES N/A

SCORE 5/10

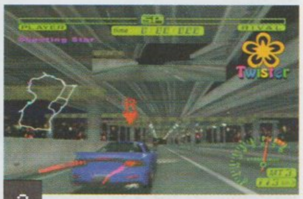
FLYTHROUGH

FIVE STEPS TO WIDE BOY HEAVEN

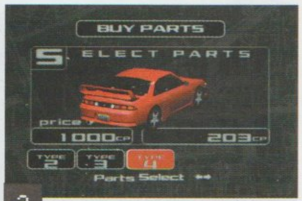
Tokyo Highway Challenge isn't a complex game, but it does look good. Here's the essential gen...



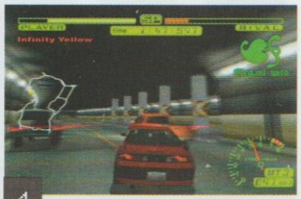
1 Having only one track limits things somewhat, although a few choices of route help to stop it getting too dull.



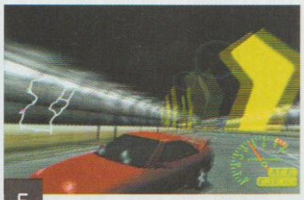
2 Flash your lights to issue a challenge, and you get to see your opponent's vital statistics.



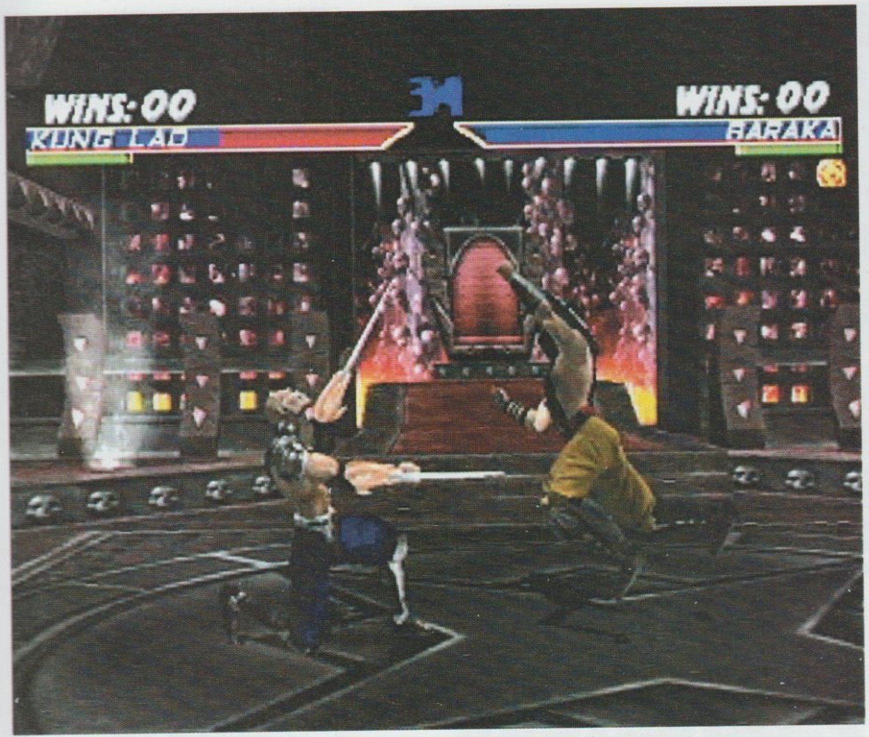
3 Car looking a little dull? Take your winnings along to the tuning shop and get busy with the styling kits.



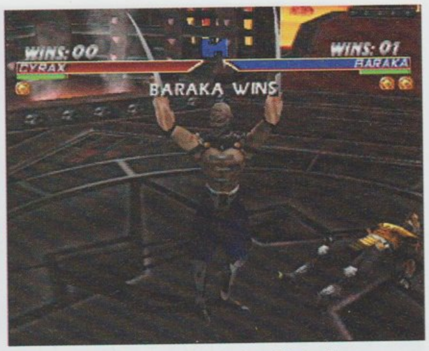
4 This being a public highway, you have to contend with other road users as well as your opponent.



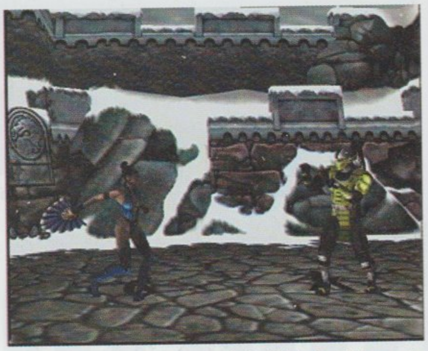
5 No gags about hitting concrete pillars in underpasses. No siree. It would be messier than this in real life.



△ *Mortal Kombat*'s action will be easily recognisable to anyone who's played the previous games in the series.



△ Old favourites like Baraka are back, and 'arder than ever.



△ There's an array of backdrops, all of which look stylish enough.

MORTAL KOMBAT GOLD

Why fight fair when you could be ripping your opponent's head off? **STUART DREDGE** bares his teeth

IT'S STRANGE TO THINK THAT A FEW YEARS BACK, the original *Mortal Kombat* caused a huge controversy, with *Daily Mail* readers worried that its spurting blood and gory death moves would turn their kids into mini-Hannibal Lecters. Naturally, sales of the game rocketed as the kids scrambled to get their hands on it. Since then there's been a series of sequels, each causing less of a scandal, as the anti-games lobby found other targets to pick on.

Mortal Kombat Gold holds few surprises for anyone familiar with the series, or indeed the arcade *Mortal Kombat 4* from which it's been converted. The graphics are suitably swanky, and there are more characters to choose from than ever before, but otherwise it's pretty much business as usual.

There are 20 fighters to control, including a few that will be instantly familiar to hardcore fans of *Kombat* – Cyrax, Mileena, Kitana, Baraka and Kung Lao, for example – although they're now all in 3D. The other original characters have presumably been retired, and now spend their time getting plastered and lamenting the good old days of 2D. Maybe.

Like all its predecessors, *MK Gold*'s unique schtick is the fatality moves that you can perform when you've beaten your opponent. Most involve some kind of bloody decapitation, but with only two of them for each character they're only funny the first few times you use them.

MK Gold isn't a bad game by any stretch of the imagination, and it's sure to please fans of the series. Unlike some beat 'em ups, the pace isn't too hot to handle if you're not a fighting guru, and there are plenty of moves to learn.

The game often suffers from the same flaws that plagued its predecessors. For example, it's still possible to win bouts by discovering one move and then using it over and over again.

The trouble is that *MK Gold* just looks tired when compared to some of its rivals, particularly the *Virtua Fighter* and *Street Fighter* series. If you're not a die-hard *MK* fan, then this version is unlikely to convert you. Even in two-player mode there's only a limited amount of fun to be had.

If you've been following the series from the beginning, then *MK Gold* may be worth a look. However, with so many other quality beat 'em ups coming out, maybe it's time to consider a change.

"*MK GOLD* JUST LOOKS TIRED WHEN COMPARED TO SOME OF ITS RIVALS"

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**

VERDICT

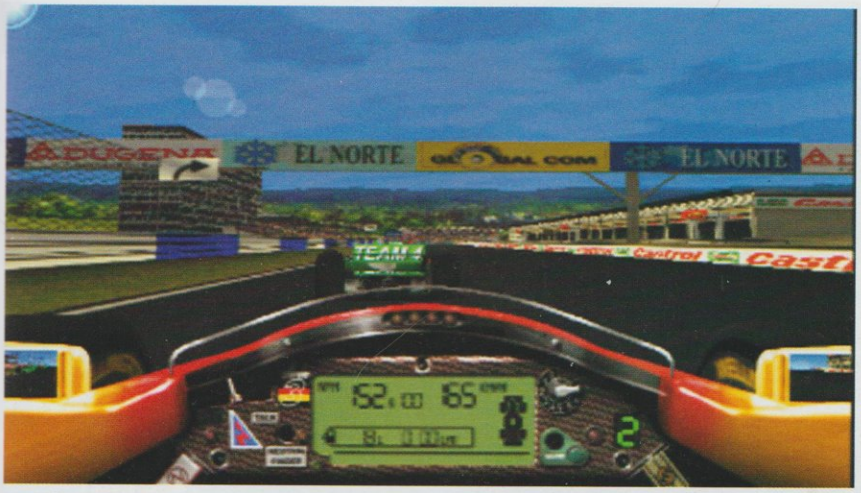
LACKLUSTRE BEAT 'EM UP EVEN WITH THE GORE

UPPERS
Lots of blood, if that's your bag • Not too intimidating for newbies

DOWNERS
Doesn't really offer anything new • Eclipsed by more exciting rivals

IN ONE HOUR We'd gone back to *Ready 2 Rumble*
WEBSITE www.mortalkombat.com
CHECK OUT www.mk5.org
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz

SCORE 5/10



△ Working cockpit displays are a neat touch.

MONACO GRAND PRIX

Does the lack of official backing leave this game stalled on the starting grid? **DAN TRENT** puts pedal to the metal to find out

***MONACO GRAND PRIX** Racing Simulation 2* is the first Dreamcast game to try and put the race back into racing cars and give Formula One fans the chance to act out their dreams of mixing it with their heroes on the track.

Almost. While the game's title uses a lot of words, there are a few key ones missing – words like 'Formula One' or 'official', for instance. This means that drivers and teams have to go under strange pseudonyms.

The courses are exact replicas of the real circuits, and you can race over them in several different modes. Arcade is as it sounds, with simplified handling and options, while the Grand Prix, single race and championship options enable you to explore the lavishly detailed simulation mode.

Everything from weather conditions to random events like mechanical failure can be controlled, with a range of car set-up choices that will have Grand Prix fans rubbing their hands with glee. There is also a Retro mode in which you can try Grand Prix 1950s style.

ON THE RACING LINE

Once you've navigated your way out of the slightly confusing menu system and started racing, the first thing you notice is the very slick-looking cars and the huge amount of detail that's been incorporated into their design. Best of all is the cockpit view that features working digital displays; choose the exterior view and you can revel in such attention to detail as realistically moving suspension that ripples as you bump over the grass – a frequent occurrence in this game. Even in the supposedly simplified arcade form the cars are extremely difficult to control, and it takes a lot of practice to reach the stage where you can stay on the track, let alone seriously challenge for victory.

Ultimately, *Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation 2* is a game for real hardcore racing sim fans. It doesn't have the pick-up-and-play attraction of *Sega Rally 2*, but it does have much more depth and involvement for the committed driving fan. While only cosmetic, the lack of an official licence is a real shame, because without this identity the game feels a bit hollow, and is a frustration that will be felt most keenly by Grand Prix fanatics – exactly the people this game should be appealing to.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **UBI SOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBI SOFT**

VERDICT

HARDCORE DRIVING SIM THAT LOSES OUT THROUGH LACK OF OFFICIAL LICENCE

UPPERS
Slick graphics • Great depth • Attention to detail • Challenging driving

DOWNERS
At times a little too realistic • Baffling menus • No official licence

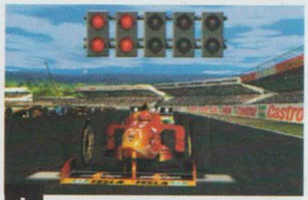
IN ONE HOUR We were still in the gravel trap
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.com
CHECK OUT www.cheatcc.com for all the hints and tips
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50Hz, VGA-compatible

SCORE 6/10

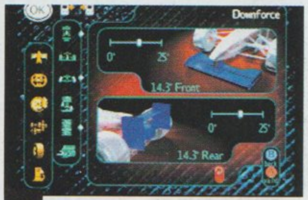
DRIVETHROUGH

SETTING THE SCENE

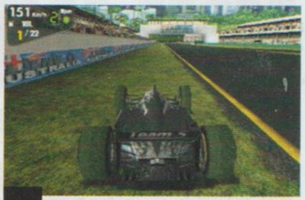
With so much detail being thrown onto the screen, things can get bewildering – unless you check out the essentials



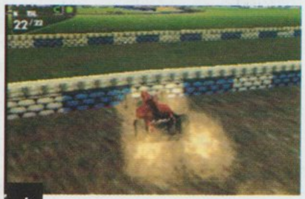
1 Watch that accelerator – jump the lights and you could find yourself getting penalised.



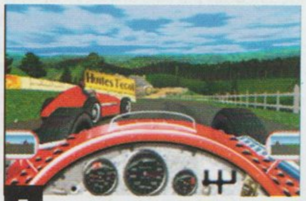
2 Even the most anal of Formula One fans will find enough things to tweak.



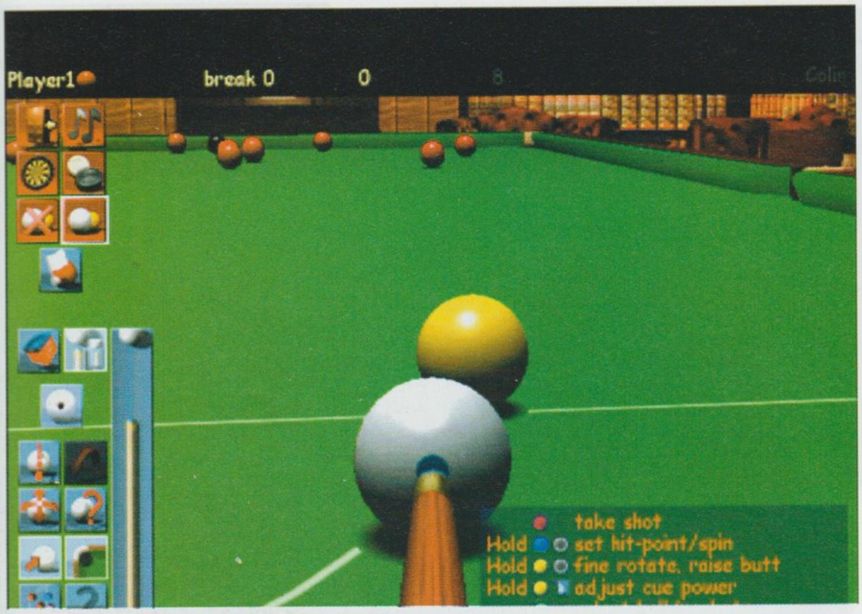
3 Go onto the grass (and you will) and your tyres turn green.



4 Great Grand Prix crashes of our time: Schumacher… er, sorry, Schmidtke ploughs into the tyre wall.



5 Retro mode is an entertaining option, even if the cars from way back do handle like barges.



△ Increase your skill on the baize and you won't have to trust to pot luck.

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL

The Whirlwind is back for the first time on Dreamcast with his potting sim. **STUART DREDGE** thinks it's not just a load of balls

YOU MIGHT THINK SNOOKER PLAYERS are boring, but beneath the glum expressions and starchy waistcoats lie hidden depths to some of them. If they're not snorting mounds of cocaine, getting into fights or boozing like troopers, they're probably gambling away their fortunes. Jimmy White may not be notorious for any of the above, but his whirlwind style has made him one of the sport's most popular potters – and his computer games have followed suit.

Cueball is a port of the well-regarded PC version which came out earlier this year. Originally its developers hoped to make use of Dreamcast's Internet facilities to enable matches to be played online, but the recent delay put paid to that. What we're left with is a game that's solid without ever really being spectacular.

The setting is Jimmy's house, which is kitted out with pool and snooker tables, as well as a host of other amusements (see the Playthrough panel, right). You get to compete against a range of console opponents, from Colin Clueless up to Jimmy himself.

It's a slick simulation, for sure, and the balls seem to move and collide accurately. You can choose which rules to use, and the console opponents provide a good challenge. Although the sub-games are only a diversion, they're all good fun, particularly Dropzone and Darts. There are some nice little touches too – your opponents cough and sneeze, for example, and there's a comedy bee that lands on the cue ball if you take too long weighing up a shot.

However, the control system that's replaced the PC mouse is a bit fiddly until you get used to it. Aiming can also be tricky, and sometimes leaves you feeling more like a pool hall prat than a world champion of the baize.

Overall though, *Cueball* rewards perseverance. And, after all, the game hardly has legions of competitors. If snooker or pool is your thing, it's well worth a look.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **VIE**
DEVELOPER: **AWESOME**

VERDICT

POLISHED CONVERSION OF A GOOD POTTING SIM

UPPERS
Smooth learning curve • Diverting sub-games • Accurate ball physics

DOWNERS
Control system a bit fiddly at first • Won't appeal to non-snooker fans

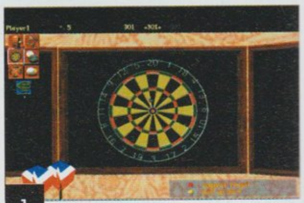
IN ONE HOUR We managed a break of 26
WEBSITE www.awesome.uk.com
CHECK OUT www.snookernet.com
MAX PLAYERS 2
VIDEO MODES VGA compatible

SCORE 7/10

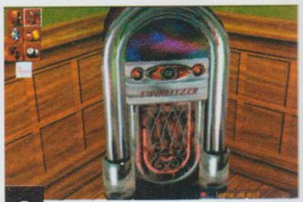
PLAYTHROUGH

SNOOKER LOOPY

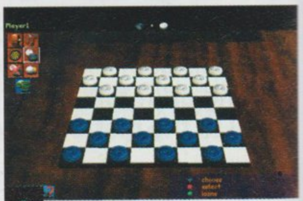
Even when you're sick of the sight of green baize, *Cueball* has a few surprises up its sleeve



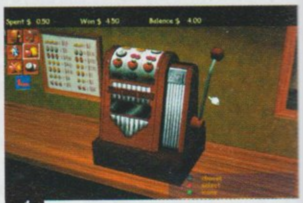
1 ▽ Sink a few pints, eat loads of pies, and throw some arrows in this addictive darts game.



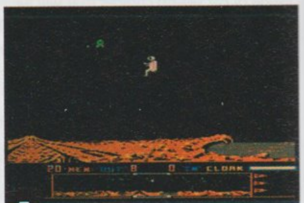
2 ▽ If you're fed up with the in-game music, why not tinker with the jukebox and get a tune more to your liking.



3 ▽ If your concentration is lacking, firm up your analytical skills with a quick game of draughts.



4 ▽ If you're feeling too rich, empty your pockets into the fruit machine – not a blue-rinsed pensioner in sight.



5 ▷ Get back to the old days, with the nostalgia-fest that is *Dropzone* – your own Dreamcast version of a classic.

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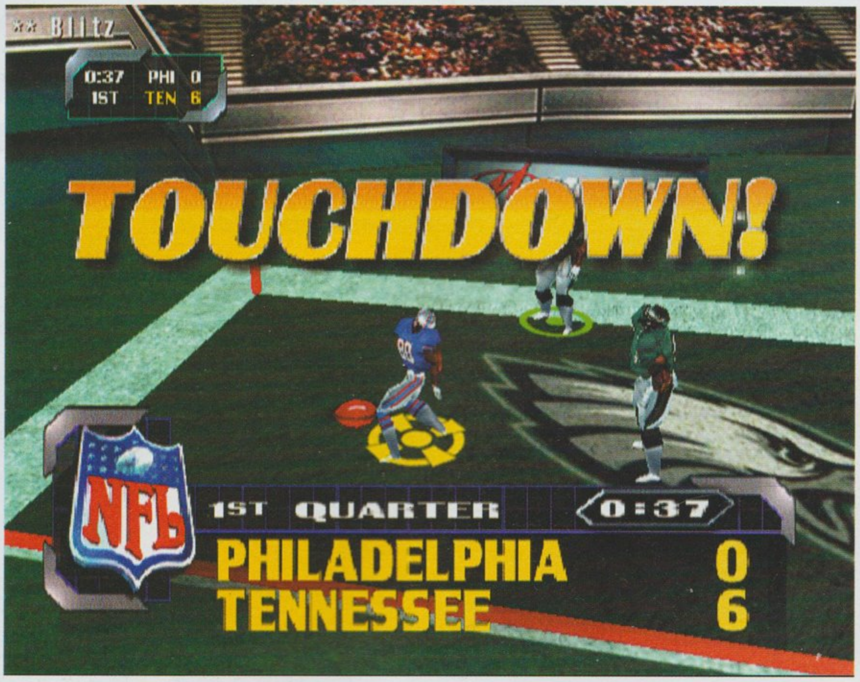
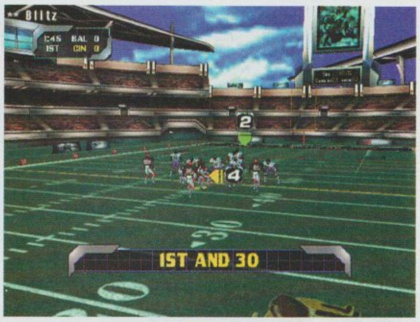
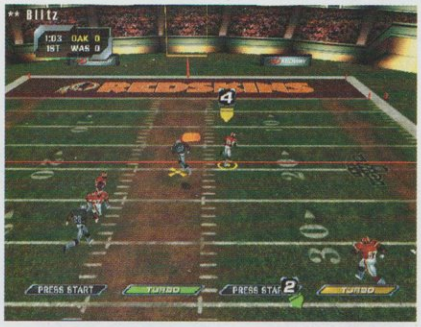


△ I guess someone's scored, then.



△ First down and how many?! Talk about moving the goalposts.



△ Visually it's good, but the steep learning curve is off-putting.

NFL BLITZ 2000

You don't have to be a 300-pound athlete in order to play American football, but it helps. STUART DREDGE bulks up

AMERICAN FOOTBALL MIGHT STILL be a minority sport over here, but gridiron games seem to go from strength to strength. And as it's still unclear if and when Electronic Arts will bring their popular John Madden franchise to Dreamcast, the field is wide open for other developers.

Over in the States, Dreamcast launched with two NFL-licensed games: Sega's own *NFL 2K*, a full-on simulation, and Midway's *NFL Blitz*, a less complex arcadey game. It seems that, for the moment at least, us Brits are only going to get the latter. Oh well.

You can tell that *Blitz* started out in the arcades: all the boring bits of gridiron have been chucked out and replaced with simpler rules, fewer players and lashings of wanton violence. Hardcore fans of the sport might resent some of the changes, but they mean that every match is fast-moving and action-packed.

So, whereas in real life you have four downs in which to travel ten yards, in *Blitz* you must travel 30. Forget grinding the opposition down with your running game; in this game you must pass in order to win. It makes life more exciting, anyhow.

There's also the violence. Okay, so no one would claim that American football is a non-contact sport, but in *Blitz* all the restrictions have been removed. Tackles can be as gruesome as possible, and you're even allowed to stomp on opposition players after they've hit the deck.

The downside to all this is *Blitz*'s steep learning curve. Unless you've been practicing on the arcade version, it's likely that in your first few games you'll be massacred, ripping out your hair in frustration as the console-controlled team runs back another interception for a touchdown. How hard is it? If you can keep the opposition to a two-figure score in your first few games you'll be lucky. Casual gamers beware.

Of course, practice makes perfect, and once you've spent a bit of time playing *Blitz*, you'll start learning the ropes and actually having fun stomping on the console teams. What's more, it's fantastic in multiplayer mode, and with four players on-screen at once it's almost as much fun if you all don't know what you're doing.

Visually, *Blitz* shows off Dreamcast's capabilities pretty well, particularly when the camera zooms in after a player has taken a hard hit. Even when you're getting hammered, at least your players look good doing it.

Despite its user-friendly interpretation of the sport's rules, it's just a shame that *Blitz*'s high degree of difficulty may make it frustrating for anyone who isn't a devout gridiron fan already. And sadly there aren't that many of us in the UK.

PRICE: **£39.99**
PUBLISHER: **MIDWAY**
DEVELOPER: **MIDWAY**

> "YOU'RE EVEN ALLOWED TO STOMP ON OPPOSITION PLAYERS AFTER THEY'VE HIT THE DECK"

VERDICT

LOOKS GREAT, BUT INITIAL DIFFICULTY MAY PUT OFF CASUAL GAMERS

UPPERS
Great fun – when you've mastered it • Lashings of violent conduct

DOWNERS
Steep learning curve • Impenetrable to non-gridiron fans • Changes some of the sport's rules

IN ONE HOUR We were still getting beaten by 100 points
WEBSITE www.midway.com
CHECK OUT www.gamersx.com/console/nflblitz/
MAX PLAYERS 4
VIDEO MODES Full screen 50/60Hz, no VGA

SCORE 7/10

» DRINKING

For the first of what we hope will be many booze- fuelled debates we went to Can in the heart of London's Clerkenwell. After cracking open our novelty cans of beer the chat commenced

THE VENUE

CAN

FARRINGDON, LONDON EC1

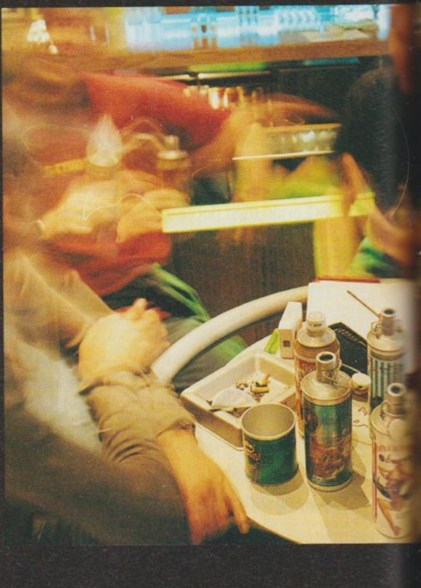
As the number of soulless chain pubs and bars swell, it's reassuring to see there are still people out there with a little thought and originality. Housed in an old butcher's shop directly opposite Smithfield Meat Market, Can's original brief was to create a seedy drinking den with loud rock music and dancing on the bar. It's turned out a little more reserved and far too slick to be seedy, but the idea is there and the place has been put together with enough wit and intelligence to avoid accusations of being over-designed and poncy.

In a bold move, beer is sold only by the can dispensed, via the staff, from a bar-length overhead fridge stocked with everything from the ubiquitous Stella to more exciting brews in a range of decorative cans. In a hugely satisfying bit of eco-friendliness a vacuum tube sucks your empty cans down a perspex pipe that runs through the toilets to a crushing machine and recycling skip. Add to this the Japanese-style vending machines selling everything from edible knickers to disposable cameras plus, in an inspired move, false moustaches, and you have all the ingredients for a top night.

Predictably, it's not cheap and the slick and suited clientele aren't the most exciting crowd, but Can deserves a cheer for doing something a bit different in a world swamped with Wetherspoon's and Firkins.

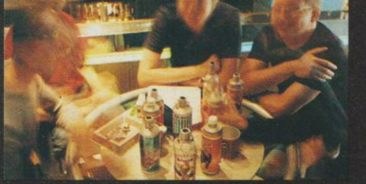
Can is on Long Lane in Clerkenwell (nearest tube: Farringdon). Opening hours are 5-11pm, Monday to Friday. Phone 020 7796 0069 for further information.

Dan Trent



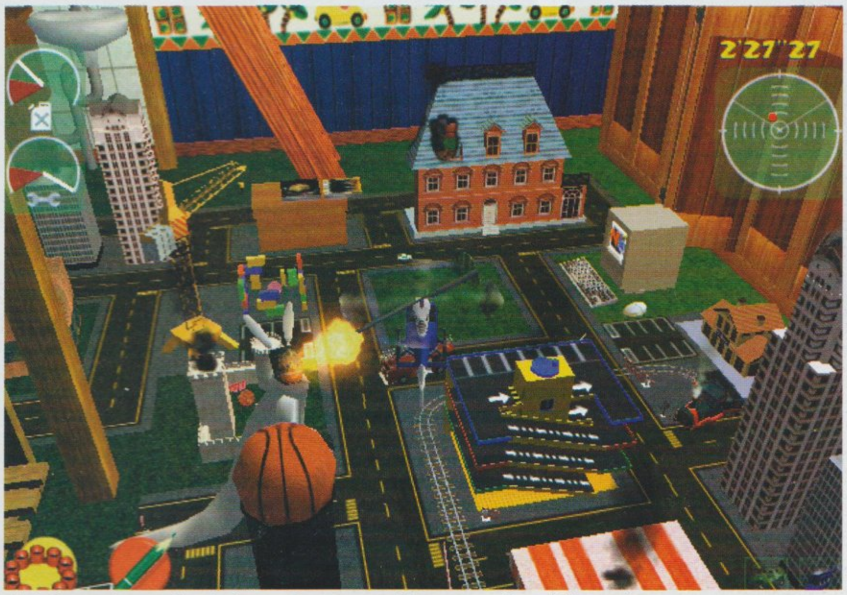
△ As you'd expect from a bar called Can, bottles aren't high on the agenda. Okay, so you can get Stella, but better still is the range of decorative cans. Obviously we had to sample 'em…

▷ As the *Power Stone* debate raged on, the mountain of cans grew, unnoticed by our diligent reviewers.



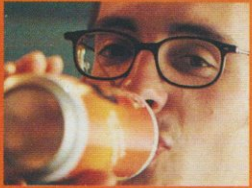
& THINKING

We give the four best games of the issue to our five top reviewers – then bugger off down the boozer to discover if everyone agrees with the scores. In the chair: **STUART DREDGE**



△ *Toy Commander*: great for solo play, according to our panel, but not so good for multiplayer action.

THE REVIEWERS



DAN TRENT

Getting back to his youth after reviewing *Toy Commander* and *Trickstyle*.

ED LOMAS

Back in Blighty after braving the madness of the Tokyo Game Show.

STEVE OWEN

May have previewed *WWF Attitude*, but he's not wearing a leotard. Yet.

STUART DREDGE

Office bruiser, having reviewed *Ready 2 Rumble* and *Power Stone*.

WARREN CHRISMAS

Still monged after a week larging it in Ibiza.

TOY COMMANDER

REVIEWED ON PAGE 78

A suitably quirky French title that's cornered the market in originality. It features the evil Hugolin Bear, who may or may not be a French relation of that bloke from *Starsky And Hutch*. Dan's still working his way through the bosses.

DAN: It's basically a really good game – it looks good and moves fast, and there are loads of little details. The only major flaw is the multiplayer mode.

WARREN: They could've got around that though. Your opponents are absolutely tiny, and the environments are too big. I've played it with four players for 20 minutes when there hasn't been a single kill.

DAN: If you get good, then the multiplayer mode is actually alright…

WARREN: Yeah, but what are your chances of getting four expert Toy Commander players in one place?

ED: Still, it's great for solo players – there's loads of missions to work through.

STU: I found it quite frustrating though. I just couldn't do that mission where you have to get the eggs into the pan, and that's one of the early ones.

ED: It might be a bit awkward in places but there's a lot of good ideas in there.

WARREN: The best thing about the game is that it's completely original. It's good that there's at least one high-profile launch game that's really innovative. Okay, so the multiplayer thing isn't perfect, but at least they put it in.

DAN: There are some wicked levels too. There's one where you've got some stinky trainers that you have to sort out with aerosol, and there's another one with a car that wets itself if you don't get it to the toilet quickly enough.

WARREN: The French, eh? Tsk…

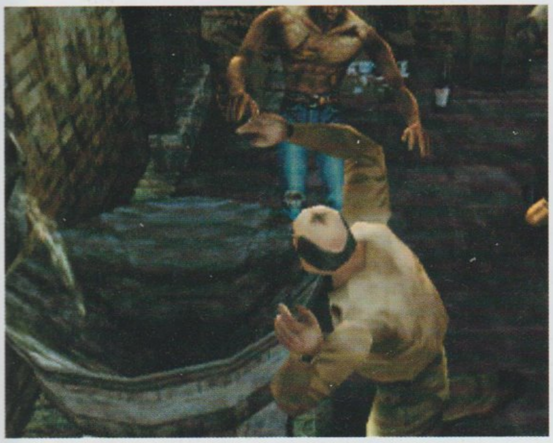
ED: Any game where you can shoot cats gets my vote. There should be more of that.

STU: What do you think of the style? I think it definitely feels recognisably French.

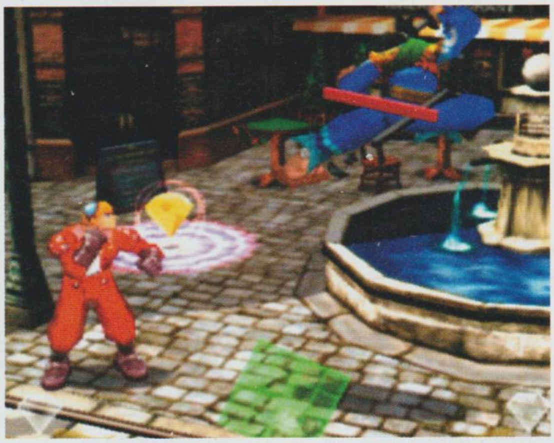
WARREN: Yeah, it's been done especially for Europe – Sega commissioned it. That's not to say that the Americans wouldn't like it, but it does look and feel very European. You can't imagine something like that coming out of the States.

DAN: In the single-player mode, I think the time limit does limit the gameplay sometimes. You've got these levels that you could spend a long time doing quite strategically, but then because you have to do them within the allocated time limit you haven't got any time to hang around, which is a real shame.

ED: Still, there's a lot of depth to it. It's one of the best one-player games on Dreamcast as far as value goes. ▷



△ ***HOTD2*: hot zombie action after you've staggered home from the pub.**



△ ***Power Stone*: slapstick beat 'em up that'll appeal across the board.**

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

REVIEWED ON PAGE 86

Zombie-filled blast 'em up, complete with Sega's gun controllers. You get to take multiple paths through the game, blasting away anything that moves. Well, as long as it's got bits falling off it already. Despite not having completed it yet, Steve's a big fan.

STEVE: This is it. This is my favourite game on Dreamcast, and the one I always end up playing.

WARREN: I don't think it deserves nine out of ten though. It's a game you'll play round other people's houses but wouldn't pay cash for. I'm not convinced these shooting games have replay value.

STEVE: But you've got all these different routes to take, and the game doesn't try to force you down any particular one. You can keep playing it over and over again, finding, learning and perfecting each route.

WARREN: I'll admit, they've done a good job in converting it from the arcade version. It looks great. It's definitely a game to play after the pub...

ED: That's such a rubbish thing to say! We should ban that from the mag.

WARREN: But it is! You won't do well at it, of course, but if you stagger home and want to play something, it's always a good bet.

STEVE: It's the ideal two-player game, but you both need to be quite good.

ED: Yeah, it's really annoying if the other person's really shit and you're really good. They end up dying all the time, and you have double the monsters to kill!

STU: I found it really tough, to be honest.

ED: Well it is. Anyone can play it and get halfway through level two, but to actually complete it on one credit is really hard. That's why there's a lot in it for hardcore gamers.

DAN: It's a bit pricey if you have to buy the game and then an extra gun for two-player mode. You could buy two games for that amount of money!

STU: Do you need two guns to make it playable, then?

WARREN: Definitely, otherwise you end up fighting over who uses the gun and who gets left with the joypad.

STU: Still, I suppose there'll be other games coming out that use the gun. It's not like the fishing rod for *Sega Bass*, which is only good for fishing games if you're playing seriously.

WARREN: It's okay, but I'm waiting for *Virtua Cop 3*. I much prefer the idea of controlling a real hard-as-nails cop in a real city.

STU: They should set it here. You could be a really hard south-east London copper going round shooting all the villains.

WARREN: Or the good guys.

POWER STONE

REVIEWED ON PAGE 74

Super-fast beat 'em up that's hotly tipped to entice people who've previously been put off by the usual complexities of the genre. Includes some of the most destructive special moves ever seen on the small screen. Warren's fave launch title, as you'll see.

WARREN: *Power Stone* is fantastic. It looks great, and you can pick it up and play it straight away. There may be some hardcore beat 'em up gamers who moan about it not being a proper beat 'em up, but that's its strength.

STEVE: Fighting games often seem too serious, designed for people who've been playing them since Way Of The Exploding Fist back in the eighties.

ED: It's very accessible, but there's so much in it as well. You can play it for an hour, and then you suddenly discover that you can swing round the beams or hang off the walls. You keep finding new things.

WARREN: I know the special moves might be limited, but they're just so funny. There are differences between the characters – some can rip down beams and some can't, and some are quicker than others.

STU: I did really like it, but I wasn't too sure about that. A lot of the characters seem quite similar. You don't have to vary your tactics much – you just run around the arena doing drop kicks and scrambling for the stones. After completing it a few times it felt like a bit of a grind doing it again.

WARREN: But if you want to unlock all the extras that's what you have to do. There's loads of extra bits in there if you keep going.

ED: They've obviously put a lot of effort into the characters and the moves to make it appeal to everyone. The hardcore gamers might get more out of *Street Fighter Alpha Zero* or something, but it'll get other people into fighting games.

STU: And maybe the beginners will actually be able to beat the experts, which you can't do in *Virtua Fighter 3tb*.

WARREN: It's a slapstick beat 'em up, basically. It's so ludicrously over-the-top, which is great.

ED: I love it, but I don't know if I'd buy it.

STU: I think a lot of people will be choosing between *Power Stone* and *Ready 2 Rumble*, as they're both aiming at the same audience.

WARREN: I'd buy both, it's as simple as that.

> "THERE ARE LOADS OF EXTRAS IN THERE IF YOU KEEP GOING"

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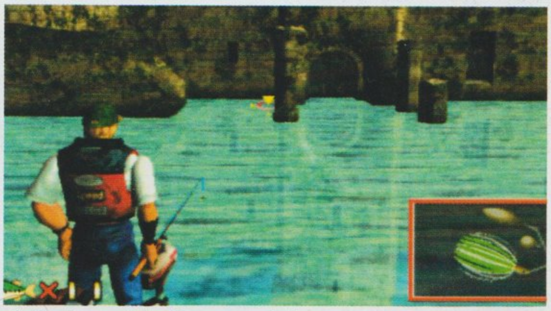
◁ *Ready 2 Rumble* united our reviewing panel.

△ Can's interesting display. What does it mean? No idea, mate – get the beers in.



△ *Sega Bass*: could do with some more sharks.

SEGA BASS FISHING

REVIEWED ON PAGE 88

Very probably Dreamcast's only fishing sim, at least until *Sega Bass 2* – which has already been announced. The Japanese have been going crazy for this, but how will it fare with our cynical panel of Englishmen? Actually, we're more interested in coming up with ideas for the sequel.

STU: I liked this a lot while I was reviewing it, but I can see it being a short-term thing.

WARREN: Like *House Of The Dead 2*, it's one of those games that's great to go and play at somebody's house, but would you actually want to buy it yourself?

ED: In terms of showing it off to my mates, I'd rather have this than *House Of The Dead*. This is such a novelty – you can end up with five people sitting watching someone else fish for an hour and they're just transfixed!

STU: None of my friends like it at all though. They just look at me like I'm a nutter.

ED: Really? I haven't met anyone who's seen the game and thought it's boring.

STU: I'm really impressed by the rod though. It's got this cool thing called a G Sensor that can sense your hand movements.

ED: Yeah, it's good. I don't like the way the game slows down when there's loads of fish on screen though.

STU: There are flaws. Once you've got the fish hooked it's too easy to reel it in. Since I've been playing I've never lost a fish once it's bitten.

DAN: They do snap the line quite often.

WARREN: Yeah, but only if you're rubbish!

DAN:: Haven't they just announced a sequel?

STU: Yeah, but I don't know how different it'll be. They should have a two-player mode where one of you's the fish.

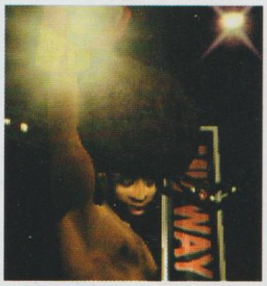
ED: No, you need an online version, where ten people can play and nine of them are fish.

WARREN: You could send messages to each other! No, I reckon they should make it shark fishing, from the back of a moving boat. Especially if once you'd caught the shark you could open it up to find what it'd been eating.

ED: You could have a four-player mode! Two of you could have harpoon guns, one could drive the boat, and the other could make sure no one got pulled overboard.

WARREN: It could come with a special seat peripheral that you'd strap on – an Action Fishing Seat!

ED: Right, we should quit this job and become games designers.



△ Afro Thunder acknowledges the praise from the *ODM* team.

READY 2 RUMBLE

REVIEWED ON PAGE 66

Game of the issue, given nine out of ten by Stu. Take on a disparate bunch of boxers in Arcade mode, or train up in Championship mode to progress through the ranks. Features comedy taunting, flamboyant special moves, and lady boxers. A hit all round, it's fair to say.

STU: I think it's fantastic.

WARREN: Yeah, so do I.

ED: Me too.

STEVE: And me.

DAN: Yep, me too. Everyone should buy it. 'Nuff said.

LIVE & DIRECT FROM JAPAN SPECIAL ISSUE

TOKYO NIGHTS

AFTER A SNEAK PREVIEW OF SHENMUE WE THREW PHOTOGRAPHER SIMON CLEMENGER OUT ON THE STREETS OF TOKYO TO INTERPRET WHAT HE HAD SEEN IN THE GAME

シェンムー

★ **PHOTOS: SIMON CLEMENGER**

★ PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSISTANCE BY **JOEL LEWIS**

★ MAKE-UP BY **TALIA S.** USING ESTEE LAUDER

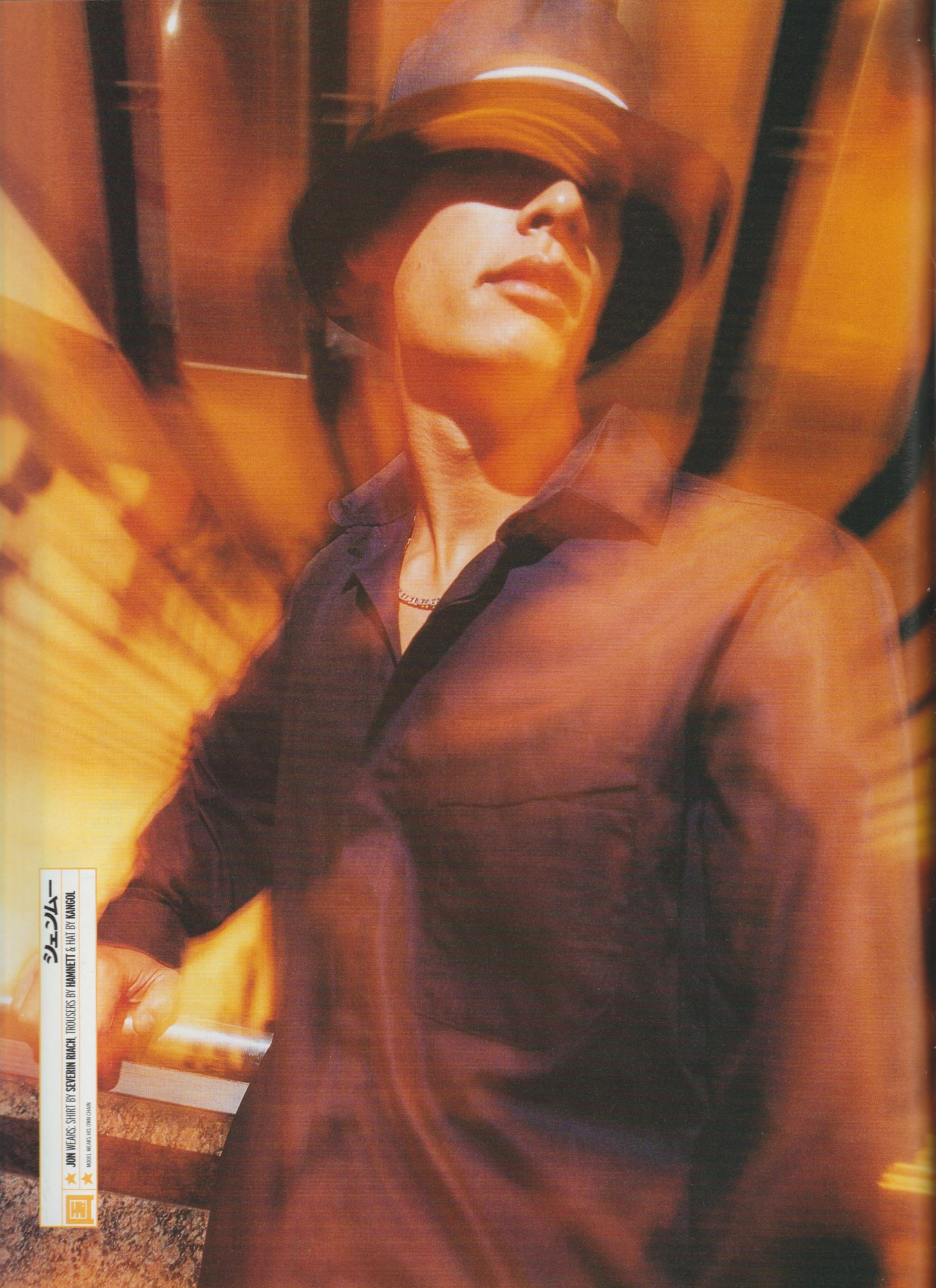
★ HAIR BY **ROBIN TOLANSKY**

★ MODELS: **CONNIE CHIU**@FM, **TENZIN**@SELECT & **JON NG** @ TAKE 2

★ STYLIST: **ALECKSANDRA OLENSKA**

シェンムー

TENZIN WEARS: BLACK DRESS BY **MARIA CHEN** & DIAMANTE NECKLACE BY **JON RICHARD**



シェンムー

★ **JON** WEARS: SHIRT BY **SEVERIN RIACH**, TROUSERS BY **HAMNETT** & HAT BY **KANGOL**

★ MODEL WEARS HIS OWN CHAIN

ジェンムー

JON WEARS: TOP BY **MICHIKO KOSHINO**

シェンムー

★ **CONNIE** WEARS: PURPLE SWIMMING COSTUME BY **JOELYNIAN**, DRESS BY **YUMI ETO**.
★ SHOES FROM **ROKIT**

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JON WEARS: SHIRT BY RICHARD NICOLL

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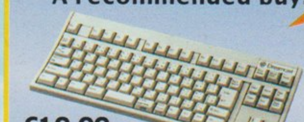

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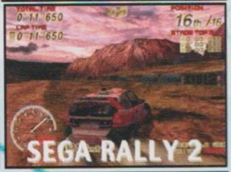
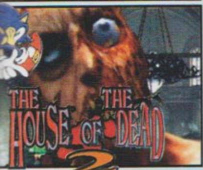
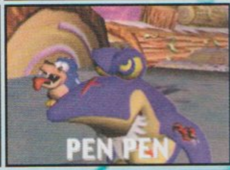
TRICK STYLE


SONIC ADVENTURE

SOUL CALIBER





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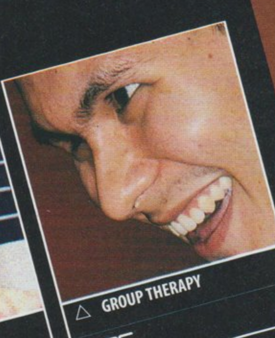

△ GROUP THERAPY

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PAGES 112 TO 129

WELCOME TO THE SECTION WHERE YOU DO ALL THE TALKING WHILE WE SIT BACK AND PUT OUR FEET UP. UNLEASH THOSE SORDID STORIES AND CONFOUNDING QUESTIONS...

SMALL BOYS, JUMPERS FOR GOALPOSTS...

DENNIS PUBLISHING TEAM KICK CELEBRITY BUTT AT THE DREAMCAST-SPONSORED MILLENNIUM CUP FIVE-A-SIDE TOURNAMENT!

WELL, THEY DID in the first four matches, anyway. To show our solidarity to our colleagues, we showed up to shout encouragement, partake of the free beer, and play 'Isn't that thingummy from whatsit?' spotting the plethora of soap stars and footie players present. We spoke to a few of them to see what they knew of Dreamcast and whether they'd be joining the queue when the console is launched. ▶

△ ANGUS DEAYTON

KNOW WHAT IT IS?

Ah, er, yes. The official sponsors of Arsenal, aren't they?

BIG GAMES FAN?

Oh yes. Monopoly, Cluedo… you name it.

GONNA BUY A DREAMCAST?

Put me down for half a dozen!

▽ PAUL FROM BROOKIE

INTO YOUR GAMES?

[Course he is – he's already got a Nintendo and a PlayStation] Yeah, I am. Me favourite's *GoldenEye*.

GONNA GET A DREAMCAST?

Oh yeah. I'm well into me games, so I'll definitely get one.

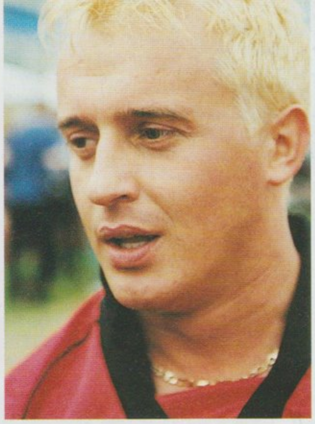
▽ KEITH ALLEN

INTO GAMES?

Never played one in my life! My little boy's well into them though.

GONNA GET A DREAMCAST?

I'll get one for my son, but for me I prefer to communicate with people face to face.



△ JIMMY FROM 911

INTO GAMES?

Oh yeah, well into 'em.

GONNA GET A DREAMCAST?

Yeah. It's always good to have the latest stuff to keep you occupied when you're on tour and stuff.

△ PAUL FROM BROOKSIDE

INTO GAMES?

Bit too confusin' for me.

GONNA BUY A DREAMCAST?

Yeah, definitely.

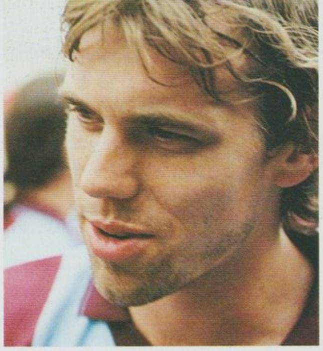
▽ SPIKE FROM 911

INTO GAMES?

Oh yeah, I've got well over 100 games for me PlayStation. Best way to wind down after a gig, really.

GONNA GET A DREAMCAST?

Definitely. I can't wait. I was having a go on that boxing one [*Ready 2 Rumble*] and that looked wicked.



△ DOMINIC FROM REEF

INTO GAMES?

Oh yeah, we play 'em all the time on the tour bus. The rest of 'em are into their footie games, but I'm more into the adventure stuff.

GONNA GET A DREAMCAST?

I'd be interested. I'd love to have a go on one.

▽ WILL MACDONALD

KNOW WHAT IT IS?

Um, let me think… Oh yes, Dreamcast, of course! The machine of the future and, indeed, the present.

INTO GAMES?

Er, no, rather embarrassingly.

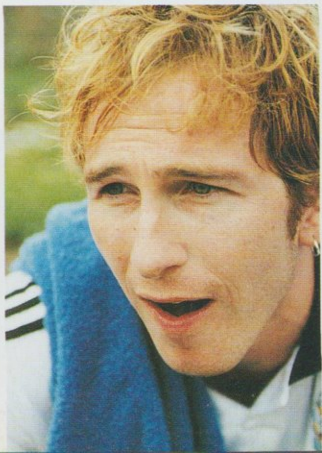
▽ PAUL KAYE (AKA DENNIS PENNIS)

HEARD OF DREAMCAST?

Kind of. I'm a Gooner [An Arsenal fan, to non-footie fans], so it makes me feel at home.

INTO GAMES?

I try and teach my little boy, but he ends up teaching me!



SEGA EVENTS

KOJAK ON TOUR

Latest French export and Dreamcast fanatics Kojak take their fat and funky sound on the road in a giant Lincoln Continental car complete with a sound system that will rock the foundations. For tour info check the music press or visit one of the following websites: www.dotmusic.com, www.eventselector.com or www.channelfly.com

DREAMCAST MILLENNIUM CUP FINAL DRAW

See the regional finals of the Millennium Cup at the Powerleague five-a-side soccer centres in Barnet (0181 201 1200) on Sat 30 October and Nottingham (0115 986 7890) the day after. The national final takes place at Arsenal's Highbury training centre and is due to be televised on Sky. For further details see www.dreamcast-europe.com

DREAMCAST/MTV LICK TOUR

Trevor Nelson's hit show heads out around the country, bringing the latest R&B sounds, top celebrities plus the opportunity to try out all the latest Dreamcast games. Tour dates so far confirmed include Hull on Monday 18 October, and Dublin Thurs 11 November. A further date is due to be confirmed for December. For further details see www.dreamcast-europe.com

PERFECTO/ DREAMCAST UNI TOUR

Paul Oakenfold hits the road and visits University campuses across the country with Dreamcast pods, merchandise and events. Check out www.perfecto-fc.com

YOU KNOW LIFE'S TOUGH WHEN...

...SOMEONE MISTAKES YOUR PLAYSTATION FOR A TOILET

Take eight pints of lager, someone blind drunk with a full bladder, and one gleaming PlayStation, and you have a recipe for disaster. As Jon Bradshaw, the owner of the unfortunate PSX in question, found out

"IT HAD BEEN ONE OF YOUR typical 'largin' it' nights out on the town – a pub crawl followed by a slap-up Indian and then on to a club. Come 1am, me and my mates came back to my place and then had one of our weekly post-booze gaming sessions on my PlayStation. Our game of choice at the time was, and over the next couple of hours (helped by several cans of Stella) we laughed our bollocks off at how badly we were playing.

"Things were especially bad for Gavin, who was off his face. Holding the joypad was becoming increasingly difficult for him, never mind holding his bladder. At around 3am the others buggered off home, leaving me with Gav, who'd passed out on the sofa, snoring like a bastard in front of the PlayStation.

"I thought 'stuff this', turned off the PlayStation's power (thank God, in hindsight) and shuffled off to bed. Unfortunately I'm one of those weird types who can't sleep through a hangover, so I woke up around 9am the following day nursing a sore head. I crawled out of bed and headed straight for the bathroom to find some headache-assassinating drugs.

"I never made it to the drugs cabinet. I glanced into the living room and saw my PlayStation's CD holder sitting open. Nothing strange there, then. That is, until part of my brain screamed loudly: 'What the f**k is it covered in?!' as I realised that the whole thing was soaked, and so was the carpet around it. Perhaps Gavin had spilt a pint of water over it in the early hours as he stumbled back to the sofa? But there was also a strange, stale smell hanging in the air.

"I was about to stoop down and touch the PlayStation when I heard a groan from the sofa. I looked round and there was Gavin looking bleary and decidedly sheepish, propped up on his elbow. He muttered: 'I'm really sorry', and then promptly fell back to sleep.

"When he came round an hour later, he confessed that he'd got up in the night and, in his drunken state of mind, thought the PlayStation was in fact made of ceramic and toilet-shaped, and proceeded to pop the lid and waz in it.

"After apologising profusely, Gav made his excuses and left, leaving me with one buggered console in need of some Toilet Duck. Fortunately Gavin saw the error of his bladder's ways and bought me a new PlayStation the following week. Which I now put on top of the television whenever I go to bed."

THE WIZARDS OF WAZ

GAVIN ISN'T THE ONLY ONE – PISSING WHILE PISSED HAS LANDED OTHER PEOPLE IN THE BROWN STUFF AS WELL

We've all heard the urban myth/true story about the drunken bloke in New York who decided to pee on the live rail while waiting for a subway train: a mass of volts shot up his 'stream' and into his body, frying him on the spot.

A less dramatic story of drunken 'relief' surfaced back in '96 when a pissed holidaymaker on a British Midland flight decided to relieve himself in the aisle of the plane in front of all and sundry, and then proceeded to grab the aircraft's exit door handle. He was called a "despicable lout" by the judge and fined £1,000.

More recently, a piss-head in Dublin used a cashpoint as a urinal. He was collared, and subsequently ordered by a judge to stand by the cashpoint with a sign saying what he'd done and how sorry he was.

Perhaps peeing while under the influence should be banned.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

SEGA
Drea
NO DIVING

YOU KNOW YOU'VE HIT THE BIG TIME WHEN.....

...YOU WIN AMERICA'S FIRST DREAMCAST

So you wanna be the first Western bod to snare yourself a free Dreamcast? Too late. Meet Sega 'freak' Daniel Aguilar, who dived into a pool of mashed potato to get his hands on the prize of a lifetime

"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A DIE-HARD SEGA FAN – I own a Sega Saturn, a Sega Genesis [called the MegaDrive in the UK], a Mega CD, and of course my new Dreamcast. I've got a couple of hundred games for the Saturn and well over a hundred for my Genesis. I do have a PlayStation but I don't really play it.

"Sega's Dreamcast spud-dive competition was held in Hollywood last November. When I turned up I had to sign my name on a card and Sega then chose five people from these – but they didn't pick me. Fortunately they decided that they wanted two people from the huge audience. They chose this mad girl in a wedding dress as one of contestants, and for the last one they said they'd choose the most crazy person in the crowd.

"So I took off my trousers, accidentally flashed my butt, and then began racing round. The crowd were cheering and encouraging me, so I took everything off and ended running round in my underwear. So I got picked – naturally.

"The competition was simple. Five of us had to get into a big pool of cold, stinking mashed potato (which came up over my waist), and we had 35 seconds to dive down and find as many letters as possible to make up the words 'Sega Dreamcast'. Because I was the last one in and the others had already managed to locate a couple of the letters, I thought I was going to lose. Thankfully I ended up finding all the letters in 25 seconds, and Sega announced me as the winner.

"Then a whole bunch of TV people interviewed me and I ended up with a cheque for $1,000, a jacket and a bunch of T-shirts. I had to wait until August this year though to get hold of the actual Dreamcast. I was really surprised, because I thought Sega were just going to send it to me, but they ended up flying me to their head offices in San Francisco.

"When I landed in San Francisco, a guy from Sega was at the airport holding up a sign with my name on it. We then went by limo to the Sega warehouse where they had TV cameras set up. I felt like a movie star!

"They interviewed me, and I was then given the first Dreamcast off the US production line by the president of Sega. After that I was taken to the headquarters and given a tour. Even though I had my new Dreamcast, they asked me if I wanted a Japanese one as well. I said: 'Yeah!' so they gave me one! I then told them my Saturn had broken and asked if they had any spare ones lying round – they then gave me one of those as well! And a couple of games, and five controllers for the system.

"In fact I must have spent the entire day asking for stuff. I had the time of my life though, and the Sega people were really good to me – it was a nice environment there. They said I should come back and be a tester for them. I think they were all surprised about how much I knew about Sega. They were like: 'Yeah, you *are* a Sega freak!'

"Bottom line though is that it feels really good to be the first one to get my hands on a Dreamcast. I've already had a couple of friends round to play on it, and they're like: 'You lucky bastard!' and 'You got all this for free? We hate you!' They all fell in love with the system straight away.

"Even complete strangers are impressed by my win. I went to a restaurant and the owner recognised me off the TV. He said: 'You're the guy who won a Dreamcast – I hate you!' He then served us our meal – free of charge."

OUT TO LUNCH

WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING FREE DREAMCASTS TO THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA TYPES ALIKE, SEGA OF AMERICA HAVE, QUITE FRANKLY, GONE INSANE WITH GENEROSITY

Not satisfied with getting humble US citizens covered in slimy mashed potato, Sega US threw down the gauntlet by asking Sonic fans to turn up outside their headquarters in San Francisco dressed as the blue-spiked one – the best example of Sonic worship would win a Dreamcast. So impressed were the bods at Sega that they threw out the rule book and dished out shedloads of prizes to several of the participants.

Even celebs aren't safe from Sega US's urge to give away free stuff – all the performers at the recent MTV Video Music Awards held in September were each given a Dreamcast. Britney Spears and Lauryn Hill slapping it out over a *Virtua Fighter 3tb* session? Now there's something we'd love to see.

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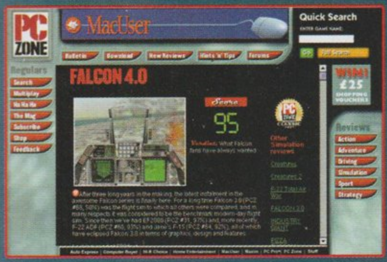
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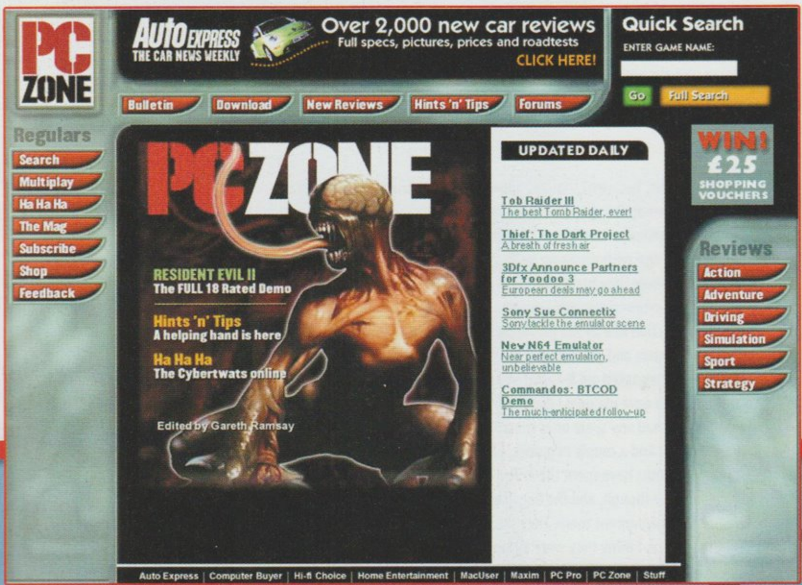
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The best Tomb Raider, ever!

Thief: The Dark Project
A breath of fresh air

3Dfx Announce Partners for Voodoo 3
European deals may go ahead

Sony Sue Connectix
Sony tackle the emulator scene

New N64 Emulator
Near perfect emulation, unbelievable

Commandos: BTCOD Demo
The much-anticipated follow-up

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- Reviews
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UPDATED DAILY AT 3.30PM

Health Warning: The PC Zone web-site can feed your addiction to games

www.pczone.co.uk

YOU KNOW YOU'RE OBSESSED WHEN...

...YOU ACT LIKE THE KARATE KID

Ever been shown up in front of your school peers? It can be a shameful experience – even when it's at the hands of a mere computer game. Nathan Page did the gung-ho Hollywood hero thang and fought back

TEST YOUR STRENGTH
PETERS AM
BASHERS
BOXING
4 BALLS 2°

"I WAS IN THE UPPER SIXTH FORM at school and ran a console club where we played games. One Saturday I got 30 people from the club round to the local church hall for a games competition. We had four Super Nintendos set up for the compo, which was based around four SNES games, one of which was the classic beat 'em up *Street Fighter 2*. I didn't actually take part in the challenge, I was more the organiser. After five hours, a winner was finally announced. The trouble was that once the winner, Nick, had beaten everybody, I decided that I'd take the opportunity to show him up by beating him at all the games.

"I hadn't played *Street Fighter 2* very much but I was a really cocky player – although he'd beaten everyone, I still thought I could hammer him. The other competitors were expecting a good fight, but unfortunately they didn't get one, as Nick ended up thrashing me at the game. Everyone laughed at me and I was so embarrassed.

"Because I felt so awful, I hatched a plan of revenge. I bought myself a SNES and a copy of *Street Fighter 2: Turbo Edition*, and spent the next six months practicing with my brother. Once a month I would play Nick or his friends, but whenever I fought them I used to throw the match so they wouldn't know how good I was getting.

"After training enough, I eventually threw down the gauntlet. The rematch was held during one of the last meetings before I was to head off to uni. I said to Nick that I was going to beat him this time, but he and everyone else expected me to lose because Nick had never lost a game.

"The event was held in the church hall again, and on the day itself I was very nervous. My hands were sweating like mad and I could hardly hold the joypad – this was my last chance to get my own back, and my credibility was on the line.

"Our rematch was the main event, with all the same people who had attended before. The actual rematch was the best of three rounds on *SF2:TE*. I played Honda, the fat Japanese guy, and, using tactics drawn up over the previous six months, beat Nick in two straight rounds – much to his horror.

"He demanded a rematch, but all his friends cried out 'No!' because it was the first time they'd ever seen him lose. I agreed though, and this is where I had my second surprise waiting for him. I chose the fast and flexible Ryu, the same character that Nick played. After all, I wanted to beat him in every way possible.

"In the first round, a flurry of fireballs and dragon kicks brought him down. It was a close competition – he won the second round but I got him in the third. When I won, I felt absolutely delighted. My six months of training had paid off. I proved I could do it, got my credibility back, and showed that whatever the game, I could win.

"Everyone was laughing at Nick, especially his friends. He'd obviously been beating them at the game for the last three years and he took the defeat badly. A week later, he sold his SNES."

THE KING OF KARATE

WITHOUT THE *STREET FIGHTER* SERIES, THE BEAT 'EM UP GENRE MAY NEVER HAVE TAKEN OFF

Cited by many industry pundits as the game that defined the one-on-one beat 'em up genre, the *Street Fighter* series first touched down in the arcades in 1987 courtesy of Capcom. While the original *Street Fighter* was a clunky affair with poor animation, Capcom soon realised its potential.

Come 1992, and the beat 'em up genre was truly born with the arrival of *Street Fighter 2*. With its fluid animation, innovative button control system, intelligent learning curve and the ability to fight as any one of the eight available fighters, Capcom had hit the bullseye. The gaming world went mad, with many declaring it to be the greatest game of all time.

A mass of 'sequels' and updates (and a piss-poor movie) continued the *Street Fighter* franchise, but with the sublime *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken* series flexing their 3D muscles it has lost much of its original cache. That said, Capcom are planning to develop *Street Fighter* for Dreamcast and it'll be well worth checking out. After all, without the *Street Fighter* series we may never have witnessed the likes of *Virtua Fighter 3tb*.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LUMLEY

IN THE HOT SEAT
WITH SEGA

EVERY MONTH, WE GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO SEGA. SEND US YOUR QUESTIONS AND WE'LL PUT THEM TO THE PEOPLE BEHIND DREAMCAST, THEN PRINT THE RESPONSES HERE

WRITE TO US

Want to get something off your chest or get the official response to a query that's been bothering you for ages? What are you waiting for, then? Get writing. Address your letters to:

Sega Q&A, ODM, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Alternatively, email us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk using the subject heading 'Sega Q&A'.

PRINTING PRESSURES

Will Sega be releasing a printer add-on so I can print out Web pages?

Daniel Hawthorne, via email

Dreamcast is an evolutionary product with flexibility built into the whole design. If enough people develop a need for a printer, then we will look into releasing one in Europe.

SPOT THE WIDE BOY

I own a 32-inch widescreen TV, and I've had problems with my PlayStation light-gun. Will Dreamcast's light-gun work on it?

Marc Scott, Brighton

You may experience problems with some digitally processed widescreen TVs.

FLASH HARRY

I heard that the Dreamcast browser won't support Flash and Quicktime, so why is the Dreamcast Europe site such a Flash extravaganza?

Ian Gollins, Crewe

Flash 3 is supported by the DreamKey browser. The Dreamcast Europe site is mainly for PC users; DreamArena is the main portal site which you access on your Dreamcast. This site is specifically designed for Dreamcast owners.

DOWN UNDER

If I take my Dreamcast to Australia will it connect to the European or Australian Internet provider? Also, will I have to change my email address?

Chris Moore, via email

Our partnership with BT allows us to offer free pan-European Internet access. This service does not at present cover Australia.

SWITCHED ON?

Will the PAL Dreamcast incorporate a 60Hz switching unit so that we'll be able to play games at full screen/full speed? If so, will all game developers include this facility?

Raj Farmer, via email

The option of switching to PAL 60Hz is a software issue, not a hardware issue. There will be no switch on the Dreamcast unit. Some games will offer the option of using 60Hz via a menu selection – if your TV can take this type of signal. Not all games require this; there will be games available in Europe which are full-screen as standard.

SUPER SONIC

I'm a huge *Sonic* fan. Is there a fan club that you could supply me with the address of?

Richard Cannon, Sheffield

Check out the Internet functions on *Sonic Adventure* and your questions will be answered – online!

CHIP OFF THE BLOCK

Is it possible to get a chip for my Dreamcast so that I can play Japanese games?

Daniel Hunter, Woking

Tut, tut! You realise that would invalidate your warranty?

SPEED DEVIL

How can Sega guarantee that online games will run at an acceptable speed when there are often problems with PC online games?

Nathan Baseley, Guildford

With our partner BT we have created an exclusive pan-European network for Dreamcast users. This network is reserved for Dreamcast use only, and will therefore not suffer from the problems of slow-down that are currently experienced by PC users on the Internet.

TREADING THE 'BOARD

Will I be able to use the Dreamcast keyboard to play games?

Gary Osborne, Middlesbrough

It is possible to use the keyboard to play games if the games are designed for this. To date we have not announced plans to use this option.

SCRATCH HAPPY

1Gb can be crammed into one disc. Does that mean the disc is more sensitive to scratches?

Damian Winter, via email

GD-ROMs are a very compact and sturdy way of storing data, but correct handling of the disc is always important. Always read the instructions in the box.

EXPLAINED

SEGA'S NIFTY LITTLE VGA BOX

In Japan, the VGA box has been one of the most popular Dreamcast peripherals. It willll hopefully come out over here next year, so there are some things you should know about it…

WHY BUY IT?

Because it enables you to connect your Dreamcast to your computer monitor, giving you a sharper picture at a higher resolution. Put simply, your games will look even better, and you may even get to see extra details that you'd otherwise miss out on.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Simple. You plug your Dreamcast into one end, and your monitor into the other. In case you're wondering, there's also a port to plug speakers into. However, you need to check that the games you want to play are compatible with the box – not all titles are, unfortunately.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

If you're constantly having to fiddle with the controls on your TV to get a decent picture, the VGA box is a godsend. Much of the fuss surrounding Dreamcast comes from its ability to produce gorgeous visuals, and although a TV is perfectly adequate, a monitor can offer a new dimension to your gaming pleasure.

HOW'S THAT?

Take *Sonic Adventure*, for example. Okay, so you won't actually get any benefit to the gameplay, but a VGA-box improves the look of the game immeasurably, and some of the scenery will leave you gobsmacked. Without wanting to sound spoddy, the VGA box is great for things like textures in nature – rocks, walls, trees – all of which are common in *Sonic Adventure*.

***Sega Bass Fishing* is another example, even though you might not think its visuals are particularly hot. Run it through a VGA box, however, and the underwater scenery is stunning enough to make you forget about catching fish altogether.**

The VGA box basically brings out the little details that you wouldn't get to see on a normal TV. If you've got a monitor hanging around the house, or can pick up a cheapish one second-hand, it's a near-essential purchase.

- *No plans to release the VGA box in Europe have been confirmed, but our best guess is that it will be out by the middle of next year priced around £40.*

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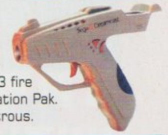

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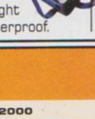

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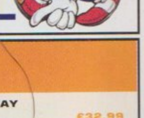

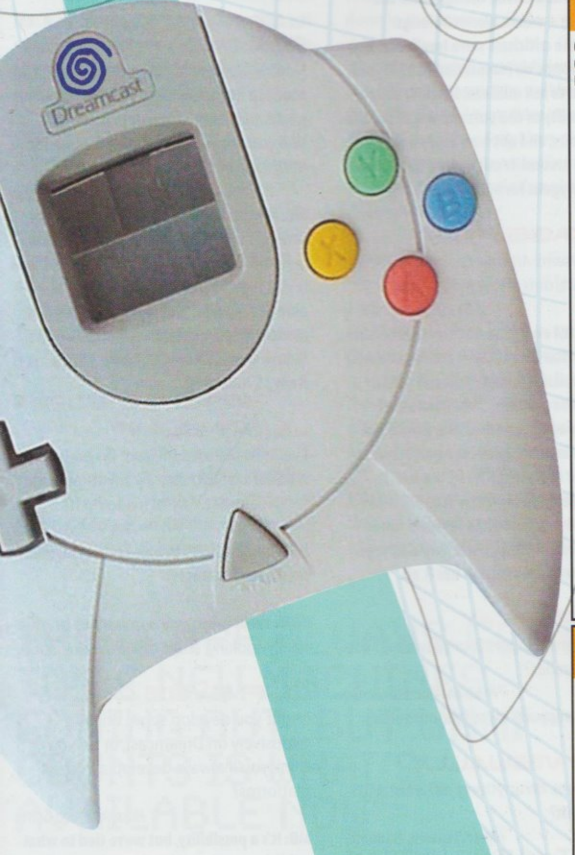

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IN THE HOT SEAT

WITH MARTYN BROWN

ANOTHER OF DREAMCAST'S LEADING LIGHTS SPURTS FORTH ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE DEVELOPING FOR THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL CONSOLE. THE BEST BIT IS THAT HE'S GOT TO ANSWER *YOUR* QUESTIONS

If there's one company that has typified the world's demand for enjoyable videogames rather than just good-looking ones, it's Team 17. Starting off on the Commodore Amiga at the end of 1990, one of Britain's most innovative development houses shot to fame over the last few years by producing the mind-bendingly enjoyable multiplayer game *Worms*.

The latest instalment, *Worms Armageddon*, is due on Dreamcast before Christmas, and looks sure to cause as many family rifts as the original, using its surprisingly simple strategy of destroying your opponent's army of wrigglers before yours are wiped out. But there's also the gorgeous-looking *Stunt GP* to come, and that's before the beginning of the new millennium.

We put your questions about life, the universe and everything to Martyn Brown, Team 17's development director…

FLAT PLAN

Worms is hardly the best demonstration of Dreamcast's power. Have you done anything clever to show it off?

Dominic Gilhurst, Langley

MB: It's true that the title doesn't really showcase the hardware, and it's also a 2D game. That said, it is unique, and Dreamcast represents a brilliant medium to play the game on. It's like having a very shiny version of the PC version that's more socially acceptable and can be brought into the living room – where *Worms* belongs.

The same criticisms were levelled at the original *Worms* on PlayStation in 1995, and it went on to sell millions. Surely it should be the quality of the entertainment on offer that matters, and not how many polygons are flying around. It might look like 2D, but we use polygons for everything.

VINTAGE PORT

How is *Worms Armageddon* different on Dreamcast, or is it just a direct port?

Julia Hughes, Godalming

MB: With *WA* on Dreamcast we've been able to ensure that it's the most accurate console version available, simply because of the power of the machine. This means that we've managed to pack all the animation and audio into the game at a performance akin to the top end of the PC market. It looks gorgeous in high resolution. Other console versions have had features toned down or reduced due to memory shortage, but the Dreamcast version has it all.

FOUR PLAY

Does *Worms* support four players across each controller?

Jeff Friedrichs-Rotholz, London

MB: Yes, it supports up to four controllers.

SEE VISUALLY

Does *Worms* do anything different with the VM unit?

Nigel Bridgmont, Edinburgh

MB: Not especially, it's just a medium for the saved games. The real fun is the action on-screen.

MOUSE FAN

Is it easy to control your worms with the Dreamcast controller? Wouldn't we be better off with a mouse?

Kalvin Alsop, Gloucester

MB: Not really, it works great on a controller. The PC control was okay, but I think it feels great on a pad.

LONGING FOR ONLINE

No one is really taking advantage of the modem at the moment. Surely *Worms* is perfect for some Internet challenges. Will you support it, and if not how about in the future?

Beverley Knott, Liverpool

MB: *Worms Armageddon* won't come with Internet support. We're already considering a modem version should we get to hear how it will all work from Sega's end. It's absolutely perfect for *Worms* – it's a great modem game, as shown on Wormnet [the Worms Gaming Network for PC, with players from 35 countries].

JUMP JUMP

I've seen pictures of *Stunt GP* on PC and it looks excellent. Surely this is perfect for Dreamcast. Any plans to do it?

Jake O'Rourke, Dublin

MB: Absolutely. It's in parallel development for PC and Dreamcast.

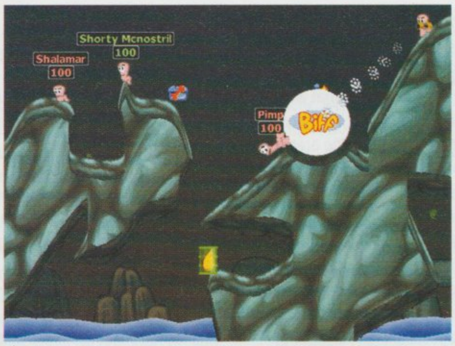
ODM: We'll bring you some news on this lovely-looking stunt driving game soon.

OUR EYES ONLY?

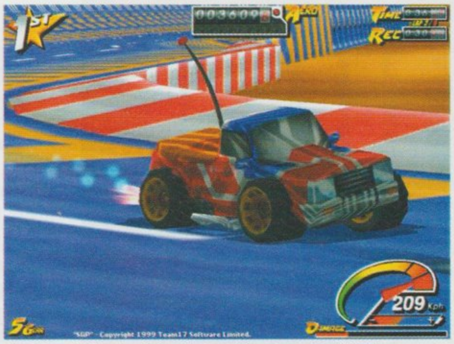
Might you develop some titles exclusively on Dreamcast, or do you think you'll always develop across all platforms?

Hussein Osman, St Ives

MB: It's a possibility, but we're tied to what publishers want, which these days tends to



△ A simple little game, but fiendishly addictive. *Worms* was the turning point for Team 17.



△ When it hits the shelves in December, *Stunt GP* will offer you the chance to carry out all manner of crazy stunts.

be multi-platform games. It also makes commercial sense for us to try to develop games that we can release on a number of formats. I'm sure we'll go on to develop some great Dreamcast games though.

FROM THE FLAMES

I've seen adverts for something called *Phoenix*. Is this coming to Dreamcast, and if so what's it all about?

Kiri Suvityasiri, Balham

MB: It's a space 'opera' combining action and strategy with a strong story and great audio-visuals. There are no plans to develop the title on Dreamcast, but plans do change.

PICK ONE

What's the one innovation or aspect of Dreamcast that most impresses you?

Shane Stockwell, Wirral

MB: Personally, I just love the output quality of the flicker-fixed high-res mode. The visual quality is absolutely superb, making Dreamcast games look clear and gorgeous. That sounds a bit nerdy and a bit sad, I guess, but I'm very impressed with it!

PIECE OF CAKE

How did you find developing for Dreamcast? Is it really easy to convert PC code, or is that just Sega bullshitting?

Ralph Evans, Littlehampton

MB: It all depends on the title and how it's being developed. We've spent a lot of time banging our heads on brick walls. To be fair, it would have been different if we'd had the Dreamcast Development Kits when initially designing *Worms Armageddon*. *Stunt GP* hasn't been a problem, since we used the Sega libraries and had the Development Kit early in the design process.

MORE THAN WORMS

Most people know you just for your *Worms* series. What else has Team 17 done in the past?

Chris Hows, Hull

MB: We've released over 30 titles in our nine-year history. We were very well known in the early '90s for our Amiga titles (*Alien Breed*, *Project-X*, *Superfrog*, *BodyBlows* etc), and the last few years have seen our *Worms* titles do very well. But we've got a few niceties up our sleeves too!

ODM: See the Once Upon A Team panel, right, for a potted history of Team 17.

EYE CANDY

Dreamcast is capable of some impressive graphical tricks. Which ones have you most enjoyed playing with, and are you planning to use the more advanced ones in the future?

Ian Lavender, Malmesbury

MB: To be fair, it's very similar in architecture to PC 3D technology we've had around for a while, so lots of things are possible and I'm sure everyone will see plenty of gorgeous special effects. Let's just hope the game quality is maintained.

THRILLS

Are you excited about Dreamcast, and is it going to succeed?

Anna Dubois, Redruth

MB: I think it will succeed if it's given a chance marketing-wise. It's got some very nice titles, and I like the fact that it's a powerful unit that is available *now* and can play top-end PC-style arcade stuff in your living room without any of the PC hassles.

I've seen a fair number of Dreamcast games and they look great. It does make all the other consoles look a bit old hat. To be fair, there are always going to be new machines coming out, but what counts is what's available now.

> "THERE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE NEW MACHINES COMING OUT, BUT WHAT COUNTS IS WHAT'S AVAILABLE NOW"
>
> – MARTYN BROWN, TEAM 17

NEXT MONTH…

We'll be printing answers to the questions you sent us to put to Ubi Soft, the French company behind *Speed Devils* and *Monaco Racing*.

For your diary, issue 3 (on sale Thursday 9 December) sees David Chomard from developers No Cliché strapped into the hot seat. If you have any questions for the development team behind *Toy Commander*, email them to us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk, or write to Official Dreamcast Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Monday 25 October.

ONCE UPON A TEAM

Team 17's legacy in a nutshell. You can visit their website at www.team17.com

FULL CONTACT

This is where it all started – a beat 'em up that had Amiga owners slavering over their joysticks. Followed it with *Body Blows* and *Ultimate Body Blows*.

WORMS

The turning point. *Worms* managed to knock *FIFA* off the top slot. Released on just about every gaming platform that has ever existed.

ADDICTION PINBALL

When no one thought that pinball games would sell any more, Team 17's attempt wowed the crowds again and sold extremely well.

Cuddlie
100
Tops
100

WORMS ARMAGEDDON

The latest version of the *Worms* franchise was released on PC earlier this year and is, Team 17 say, the last outing for the little wrigglers. It sold loads too.

GET THOSE STONES ROLLING

TO CONQUER *POWER STONE* YOU NEED REFLEXES OF STEEL AND A SOUND STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE. WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR REACTION TIMES, BUT WE CAN HELP YOU OUT WITH THE LATTER

Power Stone is certainly not yer average beat 'em up. You don't actually get close and personal with your opponent that often; it's more a case of legging it round the arena, hurling furniture, swinging off pillars and chasing after the power stones. If you're not quick, you're dead – it's as simple as that.

While it may be daunting for novice players, it doesn't actually take that long to start to feel comfortable with the game. Once you've got used to the pace of the action, you can start thinking more strategically. If you can stay one step ahead of the opposition, keeping your head while your opponent is getting his kicked in, you'll be well on the way to becoming a *Power Stone* guru.

GENERAL TIPS

The most important thing to remember is this: keep on the move. Whenever you stay still, even if it's only for a second, it's an open invitation to your opponent to clobber you with a crate, statue or other object. If you're always moving, it makes it harder for you to get cornered, which can be a killer.

When you do get in close, your options are limited, with only one button to punch and one to kick. If your foe is carrying a stone, hitting them with a three-hit combo made up of punches and kicks will dislodge it from his grasp.

Combos are quite powerful, but getting in close enough can be risky – it's far better to throw objects from afar. If your enemy tries this, don't forget that by hitting 'B' when the object gets near you, you can catch it, and then toss it back to give them a nasty surprise.

When you're throwing something, a good tip is to jump and throw it from mid-air. It makes it more difficult for your opponent to jump over it and kick your arse. It's also worth remembering that you don't have to pick up items to propel them towards the other player. Hitting the punch button when you're near them will slam the item towards them, and the speed of the move can often take your enemy by surprise.

STONED AGAIN

It should be obvious that you can't ignore the power stones – if you don't go for them, your opponent will. Early in the game, the console-controlled characters don't seem too fussed about collecting stones, making your job easier. However, on later levels they head straight for the stones as soon as they appear, unless you can get in a quick blow to stop them.

As soon as a stone appears, you

△ Absorb our tips and he'll keep his pretty face.

should head straight for it. Always be aware of how many stones you and your enemy are each holding. If you've got two and they've got one, you can afford to take a few risks to get hold of it – getting in close for combos, for example. If they've got two and you've got one, however, you need to be cautious, hanging back and throwing objects from a safe distance.

Once you've collected all three stones you'll be powered up and ready to do some serious damage. Each character has two 'normal' moves – performed using the punch and kick buttons – and two 'super'-moves, performed with the right and left triggers on your controller.

It's common for novices to use a super-move as soon as they power up, as it does the most damage. Fools. Performing a super-move almost always uses up all your extra power. You should use the normal moves until your power energy is almost spent, and only then trigger a spectacular super-move.

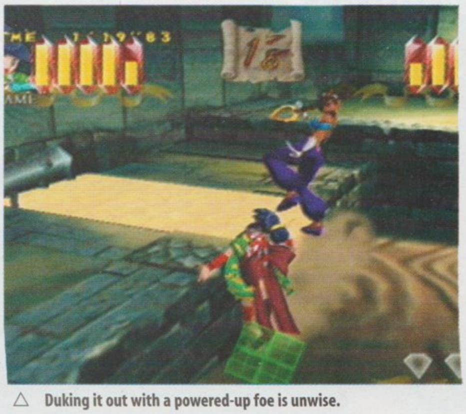
Mix up your moves when powered up, too; don't just use the long-range attack (punch button). You'll do more damage if you hit 'em with one of those, and while they're on the floor, move in close and hit the kick button to trigger a close-range powered-up attack. This tactic, when finished off with a super-move, has a great chance of killing them straight away.

DON'T HURT ME!

So much for when you're powered up, but what about when your opponent has snagged all the stones and is chasing you round the arena looking vengeful? Run away, of course. Don't even bother trying to duke it out, because it never works. Keep running and jumping, making sure you don't get boxed into a corner. This ensures that your opponent can't get near enough to unleash a close-range attack, and gives you a sporting chance of avoiding long-range ones too.

When they unleash their super-power, you might as well start praying, as nine times out of ten you take damage – often a lot of it. While you can avoid some characters' long-range super-powers by jumping at the last minute – Falcon's wussy missiles, for example – most will home in on you no matter what you try. Your best strategy is to take the damage and come back roaring – a principle that can be applied to *Power Stone* as a whole, in fact.

△ You can't avoid most power fusion moves.



△ Duking it out with a powered-up foe is unwise.

DON'T STOP THE DROP

Master the flying drop kick and you've got the upper hand

The flying drop kick is probably the most essential move to master in *Power Stone*. It enables you to attack your opponent from a distance, has a good chance of success, and always knocks out a power stone if they've got one. If possible, get to high ground before doing it, as the higher you start from, the better your chance of pulling it off. Also, if both characters attempt a flying drop kick at the same time, whoever is higher usually emerges the winner. It's a great move, and if you can't execute it well then you might as well kiss goodbye to your chances of completing the game.

NO ARMS DONE

Learn the merits of each of the weapons

Keep an eye out for the treasure chests – they contain weapons that can be used to hurt your opponent. Some are better than others though. The missile launcher is powerful, but fairly easy to avoid. It also slows you down. The flame-thrower, on the other hand, is ace. You can stand still and spray out furious flames, and console-controlled opponents usually walk straight into it.

The sword can be used for a nice jumping stab, but is otherwise useless. The hammer looks damn impressive when used to squash your foe, but you need to get riskily close to use it. The guns can be used from afar, but shots can be dodged fairly easily.

The two bombs and the Molotov cocktail are always worth grabbing and chucking at your opponent, just in case. When you've progressed through the game, extra weapons like the Extend-O-Stick become available, and it's always worth getting this, purely for its long reach.

SHORT & SWEET

NFL BLITZ 2000

VM SECRET

You can hide the cursor by moving it to the top left corner of the screen and pressing up twice, now look down on the VM screen and you can see which play you've highlighted even though it's hidden to everyone else!

SKULL HEAD

To get your player with a skull head, start the game and when asked to type in your name, type "SKULL". When it asks for your number, type all 1's.

POWER STONE

VIRTUAL BATTLE MODE

This is a split screen VS mode using the Virtua Battle system. Beat the game normally with Valgas to unlock this mode, then go to page six in the Collection menu and hit "A".

PLAY AS THE BOSSES

To play as the bosses, beat the game with every character once. You should then be able to select them from the regular screens.

PLAY AS THE FINAL BOSS

This is only possible if you beat the game using no continues (you can choose any difficulty level). Go to the Collection menu and go to the 12th stage where you see a the final boss. You can only use him in VS mode, and only one person can choose him per match.

HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2

RED BLOOD OPTION

Beat the game in original mode then go back to the option menu and you'll see a blood option.

UNLIMITED CREDITS

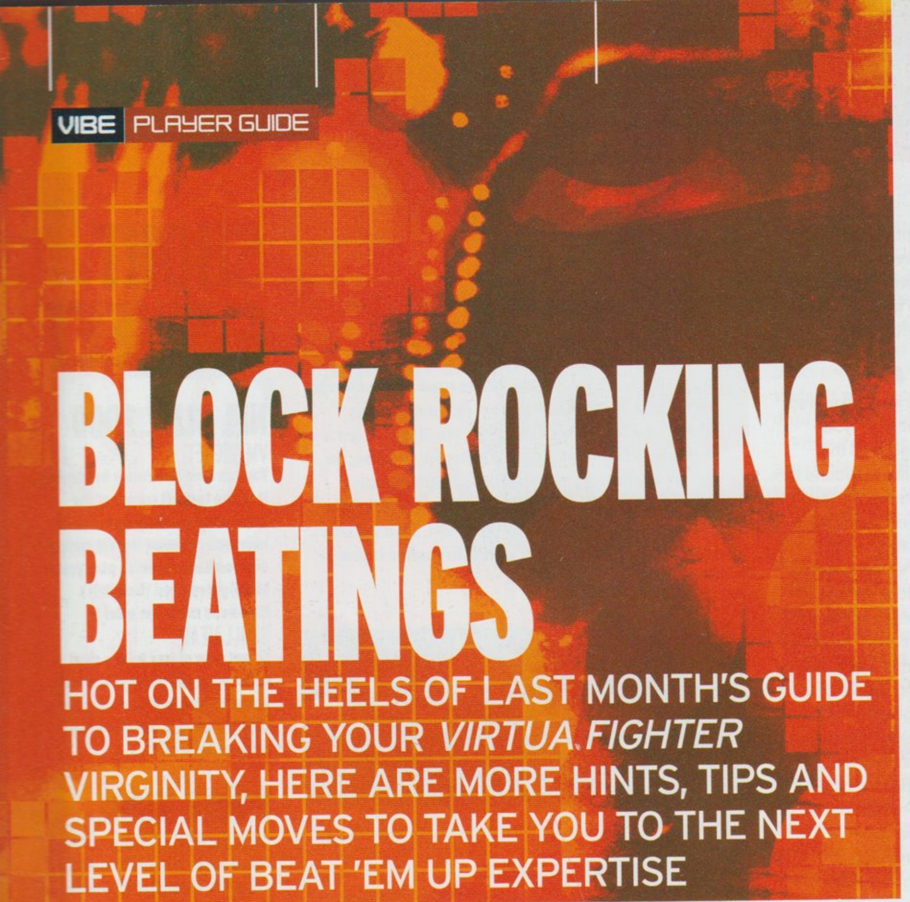
(Original Mode)

For unlimited continues in Original mode, complete the training and boss modes.

FASTER SHOOTING

Faster Shooting with the Joypad

To make playing with the joypad a little easier hold the "A" and "B" buttons down simultaneously. Firing is now much quicker.



BLOCK ROCKING BEATINGS

HOT ON THE HEELS OF LAST MONTH'S GUIDE TO BREAKING YOUR *VIRTUA FIGHTER* VIRGINITY, HERE ARE MORE HINTS, TIPS AND SPECIAL MOVES TO TAKE YOU TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF BEAT 'EM UP EXPERTISE

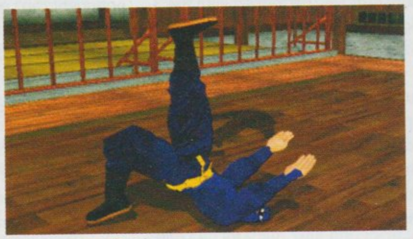
If you're still relatively wet behind the ears when it comes to *Virtua Fighter 3tb*, there's nothing worse than coming up against an expert, someone who's picked a character and learnt it inside out. The best way to avoid a brutal hammering is to make them play as a character they haven't specialised in. Naturally, it's only fair for you to do the same, so it's wise to know a few moves and tricks for each of the fighters. We covered Shun Di and Pai Chan last month, and here are three more for the collection. As ever, ◁, △, ▽ and ▷ correspond to your control pad, while P, K, G and E are Punch, Kick, Guard and Evade respectively.

KAGE

Ninjas always make cool game characters, and Kage is no exception. He's one of the faster fighters in *VF3tb*, and has a pretty good balance between offensive and defensive moves. He's got a few powerful throws, and an awesome Ten-Foot Toss/Inverted Piledriver combo that has to be seen to be believed. The downside is that some of his moves leave him extremely vulnerable to a counter-attack.

KAGE'S MOVES

◁+E	Cute Cartwheel
P, P, P, ◁+K	Triple Punch-Kickflip
▷,▷+K+G	Corkscrew Kick
◁,▷+P+G	Brutal Reaping Throw
◁+P+G, △+P+G	Ten-Foot Toss/Inverted Piledriver



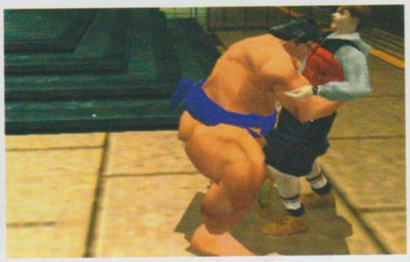
△ Kage's TFT/Piledriver move.

TAKA-ARASHI

Traditionally, whenever a sumo wrestler makes an appearance in a beat 'em up they tend to be well, crap. Taka is the exception. Okay, so he's slow and presents a huge target, but once you've learned a few moves he can be devastating. His throws score high on the damage meter, and he's got some surprisingly rapid slapping combos. He's also difficult to knock over, making him a formidable fighter in the right hands.

TAKA'S MOVES

P, P, P, P, P, P	Six-Punch Rush
P+K	Er… Bitch Slap, apparently
P+K+G	Cat's Trick
▷,▷+P+G	Bear Hug Splash
◁,▷+P+G, P+G	Catch-Turnover Slam



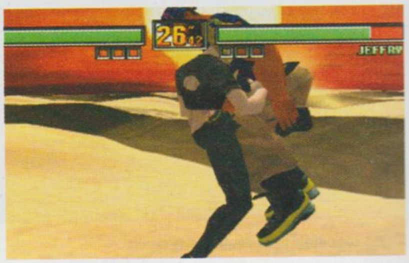
△ Who ate all the pi… aaargh!

SARAH

Potentially Dreamcast's Lara Croft, such is the feverish reaction from smitten *VF* veterans. Sarah is lightning-fast, and boasts plenty of powerful combos if you take the time to learn them. The few throws that she has are pretty spectacular, and she possesses a fair number of long-range attacks – always a bonus when you're facing a *Virtua Fighter* expert. On the downside, her bog-standard moves don't do that much damage.

SARAH'S MOVES

△+K	Full Spin Dive
△+K+G	Hopping Spin Kick
▷,▷+P+G	Clothes Line Takedown
◁+P+G	Triple Knee Bash
△/▷+K+G	Tornado Kick



△ Take that, sexist pig.

GET YER TIPS OUT

We don't want to do all the hard work around here so we're eager to see *your* hints, tips and strategies. Although we welcome submissions for any game, we're most interested in your tips to:

TOY COMMANDER
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TRICKSTYLE

Send your stuff to the usual address, or email it to us at letters@dreamcastmag.co.uk, making sure to put 'Tips' in the subject heading. And if you're having trouble getting through any game, send us your query and we'll endeavour to find the solution for you.

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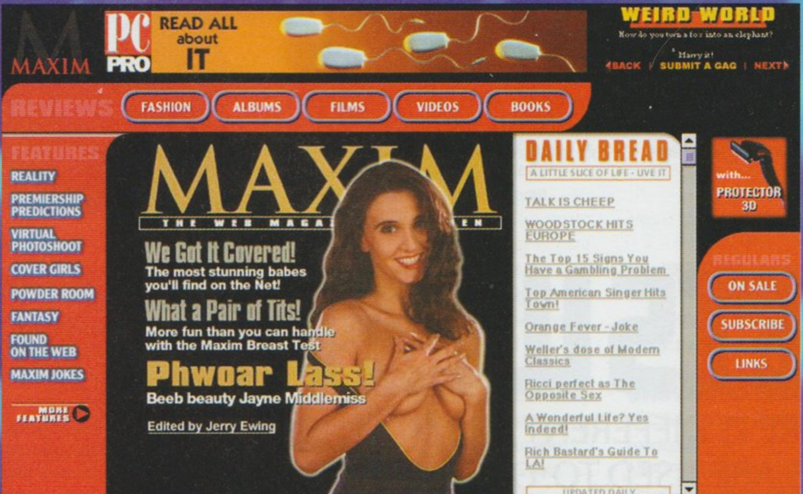
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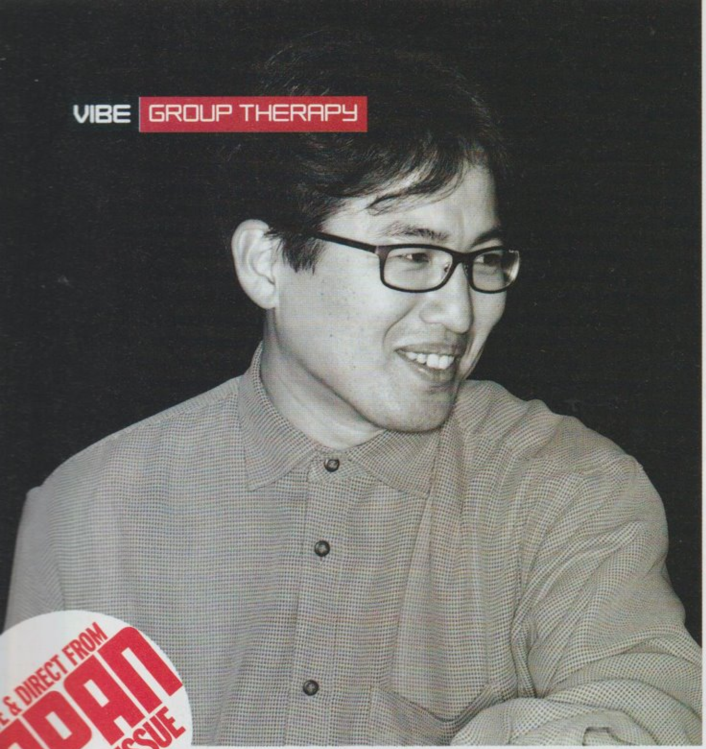


E & DIRECT FROM
JAPAN
SPECIAL ISSUE

△ ALISTAIR MCNALLY, 28, ART DIRECTOR FOR VIDEO SYSTEM

With extensive experience in both the videogames and animation industries, Brit Alistair moved to Japan a year and a half ago. Has been playing games since the age of nine.

△ KIMI SHIMAMOTO, 30, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF VIDEO SYSTEM

Started up her company here last year, producing the Dreamcast racer *F1 World Championship*. Back in Japan she specialised in multimedia projects.

EAST MEETS WEST

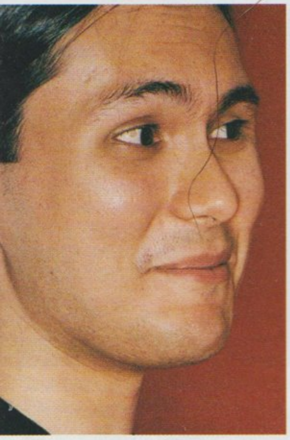
JAPANESE GAMING CULTURE IS DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING US EUROPEANS ARE USED TO. *ODM* SITS DOWN SIX COSMOPOLITAN TYPES FOR A CHIN-WAG ABOUT ALL THINGS RISING SUN-SHAPED

ODM: How do UK and Japanese gaming cultures differ?

KATS: I think they are totally different. In the UK, I know people enjoy their games, but many gamers in Japan sit in their house alone and play for up to five to ten hours a day. RPGs are very popular in Japan and are a very singular experience.

MARK: The gaming scene over in Japan is 200 per cent more than it is over here.

RUMI: For most people in Japan who live in cities, gaming is very popular because you're in the city and there's nothing else unless you step out of it. And the only space you have is your little flat and you have a console. I



△ ALVIN CHUA, 24, FREELANCE JOURNALIST
A games fan from the age of eight, he's owned consoles such as the MegaDrive and SNES, and has been following the Japanese gaming scene for years. Plans to buy a Dreamcast this Christmas.

△ KATS SATO, 34, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AT SEGA
Has worked for Sega for ten years. Began as an artist on arcade games then moved into Sega's consumer department. He has spent the last three years at Sega Europe and is currently working on a fighting game for Dreamcast.

△ RUMI VYSE, 33, CUSTOMER SERVICES
Also a Japanese/English translator and comic artist. Moved from Japan to Limey land ten years ago and has been playing games for the last two years.

△ MARK STEPHENSON, 26, MULTIPLAYER LEVEL DESIGNER ON ARGONAUT'S *RED DOG*
Has been playing games since the age of 14 when he discovered *Pong*. He's got shedloads of consoles, and follows the Japanese gaming scene via the Net.

think that's why we get so much into it because of the space problem in Japan, especially in Tokyo.

ALISTAIR: Sure, it can be a problem in Tokyo but it depends where you live and the size of your apartment.

ODM: Do you think this partly explains why Japanese games are so different from UK games?

MARK: I think a lot of people like to escape by playing RPGs. I love *Zelda* because it's all about exploration and seeing things you haven't seen before – you don't get that in Britain. One reason I like these games is that you get to see new worlds. The Japan scene also has lots of crazy, off-the-wall titles that you just don't find in the UK.

ALVIN: It seems to me that the Japanese make up for their 'city problems' by having games that boast very atmospheric settings and characters – like in their RPGs. All the characters have so much detail lavished on them. There may be a character who is not essential to the game but you meet him and he adds to the whole background of the world. We have gaming celebrities in the UK like Lara Croft but in some of the more popular Japanese games, such as the fighting games, you have 32 characters and they're all known among the gaming community in Japan. They have fans – there are people who dress up as the characters at conventions.

ALISTAIR: You can even buy school sacks, pens, pencils, lunch boxes and costumes related to the games and characters.

CASUAL GAMING

ODM: So why aren't UK gamers as hardcore?

MARK: The UK market is completely different. Gaming is not taken as seriously over here as it is in Japan.

ALISTAIR: There are people over here like that but not in the sheer numbers you have in Japan. If you had the same number you have over there, you'd find the hardcore element in the UK as well.

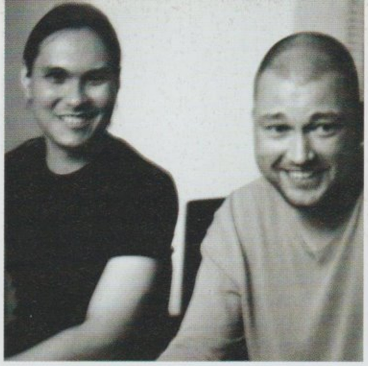
ODM: UK society though still regards gaming as perhaps a tad uncool in certain quarters. Is gaming much more acceptable over in Japan?

ALISTAIR: I would say so – yes. You see grown men playing with Gameboys on the train and you tend not to see men in suits in Britain doing the same now, do you?

ODM: Why is it so accepted in Japan?

MARK: It's a combination of experience – the Japanese have been brought up with video games so there's more people who play games and who are more experienced with game designing. With kids in the UK, they want to be footballers because they watch so much of it on telly. ▷

PHOTOGRAPHY: TANYA CHALKIN



KATS: If you ask someone in Japan what they want to be when they grow up, they'll say a game designer…

MARK: But in Britain, if you say to your parents "I want to make video games", they're like "yeah, yeah, of course you do," but they still expect you to be a doctor!

ALVIN: Maybe games are more accepted in Japan because consoles are regarded as a regular piece of home entertainment kit. Everybody accepts VCRs – you don't need to market them.

KATS: In Japan, if you're going to move house, you buy a TV, a video and a console. It comes together. You usually have one in your house.

ODM: Would you say that the Japanese adopt technology much quicker than us Brits?

ALISTAIR: Yes. It's like when I got my apartment in Japan it had ISDN built in. The landlord is hooked up to an ISP and you can plug straight in. You're even allocated an email address for your apartment as well. You can also play network games with the guy in the flat above you! That's how different it is.

MARK: I can't see it happening in the UK though.

KATS: I'm also surprised by your shops here. We can buy games anywhere in Tokyo even in convenience stores like 7-11.

ALISTAIR: I buy all my software from the convenience store round the corner from my apartment. It's just so much easier to buy. Where as over here, you have to go on a bus or taxi ride to the high street to get to the likes of Electronics Boutique.

MARK: It's like an event over here.

ALISTAIR: Where as in Japan you can stagger home pissed in the early hours and think "I'll buy some games". I've done that a couple of times!

KATS: In Japan, the games are seen as one of the entertainment businesses. Here in the UK, games are seen as entertainment – but not as much as cinema.

JAPANESE OBSESSION

ODM: Why do you think the Japanese crave consoles and technology so much?

MARK: Japanese are gadget mad.

RUMI: Anything new or fidgety, the Japanese want it! It's just a cultural thing – a tradition. Like when you start school in Japan, you get a really neat and compact stationary kit. I still remember the one I got – perhaps it all starts from there.

ALISTAIR: In the UK the kids squabble over which trainers they have, but over there it's gadget-driven because all the school uniforms are the same.

ALVIN: I think in the UK there's a bit of a negative connotation as well to being too into technology because people think you're a bit nerdy. And it's not just games or consoles – if you're into sound systems in a big way, everyone thinks you're obsessed!

> "IN JAPAN, IF YOU'RE MOVING HOUSE YOU BUY A TV, VIDEO AND CONSOLE. IT COMES TOGETHER"
>
> – KATS SATO

RUMI: In Japan, it's not that you have to get a console for this game or that. It's more – so and so has got it so maybe *I'll* get it as well.

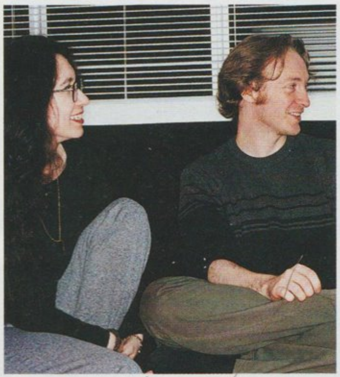
ODM: The Japanese gaming scene seems to boast a much more wide and diverse range of games. Are UK gamers simply in love with *Quake* clones, or are our gaming tastes being dictated by publishers who think they know what we want?

ALISTAIR: I've seen it happen far too many times – where game designers or producers in UK games development are not given a free reign. They have little control over the programmers or artists. In the UK, the game designer ends up as a level designer and maintains the design document, where as a game designer or producer in Japan controls the whole show. What he says, goes.

KATS: In general, the trouble is that publishers are very market driven, especially American companies. There may be a new strange game which will be popular in Japan but if they can't see any forecasts and don't know how many will sell in America, it may be passed over. It happens in Europe as well.

ODM: So how does Sega regard UK gamers?

KATS: We always try to get different titles to the UK but sometimes it is more than just business. The RPG is quite hard to translate and we know that a football or driving game will be much more popular here. We



concentrate on bringing those titles to the UK first!

ODM: In Japan, how does games advertising differ from the UK?

ALVIN: Here in the UK, advertisers seem to try and sell games as lifestyle items. Games like *Wipe Out* on the Playstation tied it in with lots of fashionable musicians. It's like brand association where they don't really focus on the actual game as much.

MARK: The advertisers are very scared of just putting pictures of the game in the adverts over here.

ALISTAIR: Where as in retrospect, the Japanese advert for *Formula One Grand Prix* on N64 was made up of just the game's graphics.

RUMI: Graphics are important – when I saw the *Final Fantasy VII* ad that showed off the graphics, I thought: "Oh my god, that's so good looking". That's one of the reasons I bought it. I think graphics are very important and I think Japanese people are more into it from the graphics side as well. I'm not saying it's not important in Britain but maybe it doesn't leave such a strong impression. Maybe in the UK, they want the lifestyle angle not just the graphics.

KATS: In Japan, it's very much more straight forward – we tell the message directly. In your advertisements, it's sometimes "What is this advert? Oh! It's a games advert". Sometimes it's really hard to understand.

CONSOLE KINGS

ODM: Why can Japan produce top selling consoles? What are us Westerners doing wrong?

MARK: We're relying too much on hardware and not the software – the main key for any launch is the software.

ALISTAIR: It's more than that – it's also down to developer support. In the past, non-Japanese manufacturers don't talk to developers enough. Also, look at every console that hasn't been Japanese – they're so ugly! The Atari Jaguar looked like a toilet. Even the SNES which was redesigned for the American market was a purple brick with a reset button. I think it's the whole package – Playstation was a success because it looked cool and had a good controller.

ODM: What about Dreamcast?

MARK: The Dreamcast is so nice to hold. It's so tactile. You can feel the quality.

ODM: Can you see a time in the future when the UK and Japanese gaming cultures converge?

MARK: Yes. I think with the likes of Dreamcast, the PC market and the Net growing, hopefully the computer games market will become truly global, where people can choose what type of game they want to play just by going on the Net. They are not limited by territories.

ALVIN: That's very optimistic!

KATS: In the very near future you will be able to play the same game with Japanese people over the Internet. It's going to be world-wide. It hasn't happened before – if you buy software in the UK, you probably play with your friends in the UK but with Dreamcast you will be able to play with Japanese people and communicate.

ODM: So will the two gaming cultures become more social and accessible?

ALISTAIR: Yeah, the Internet is the major contributor and making the world smaller and bringing people together.

RUMI: Also, a lot more cultural stuff from Japan is coming to the UK. I've seen more Japanese stuff around London. This will hopefully lead to an understanding of the two different cultures. And perhaps lead to more different Japanese game titles coming over here. Fingers crossed.

> "MY APARTMENT IN JAPAN HAS ISDN BUILT IN SO YOU CAN PLAY NETWORK GAMES WITH THE GUY UPSTAIRS"
>
> – ALISTAIR MCNALLY

LESSONS TO LEARN

ODM: If you could choose one thing that we could learn from each other's gaming cultures, what would it be?

ALISTAIR: Personally, I think games development in the UK should become much more like it is in Japan. Having done games with teams in Britain, you sometimes have to fight just to get the game done – too many chiefs and not enough Indians. I would like to take much of how games are developed in Japan and bring their techniques to Europe.

KATS: I'd like to take a lot of UK programmers to Japan. If you get a person who has studied programming at a Japanese uni, you won't find them working so much in the games industry. I think you get more of a percentage here in Britain.

MARK: The whole presentation style. I think the Japanese have presenting the game itself – the front end – down very cleanly. In the UK, you're messing about too much just to get into the actual game itself.

ALVIN: What I'd like to see in Japan are really large multiplayer games like you have in Europe. You have multiplayer games in Japan but not large multiplayer environments like *Ultima Online*. Perhaps Dreamcast can do this.

RUMI: Just having different ideas from Japan come over here would be good. Also, maybe there are some ideas here in the UK that Japan hasn't thought of which they could take back over there. I think if Japanese and British people could get together and work together to create a game, they could come up with something really different.

COMING SOON

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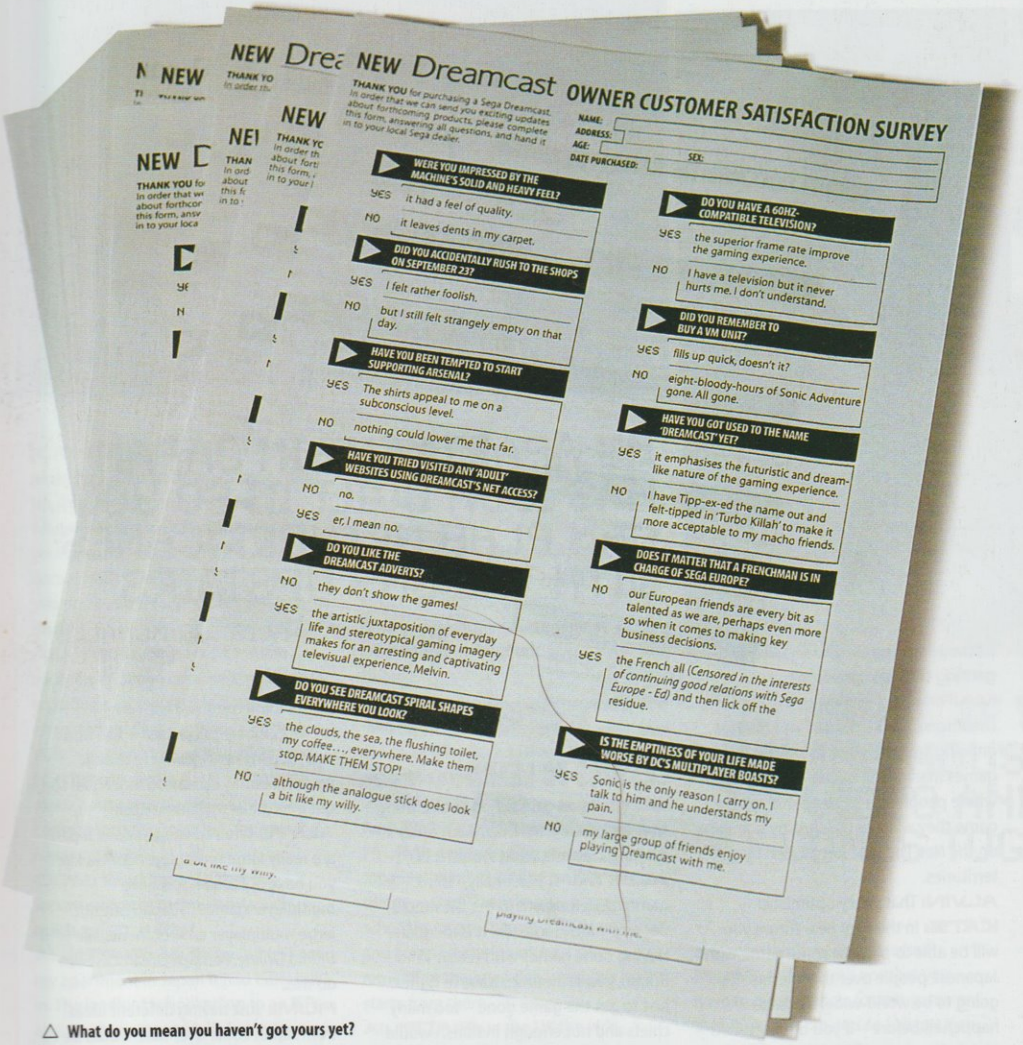
OUR SURVEY SAYS

Official Dreamcast Magazine tears up the form book



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WERE YOU IMPRESSED BY THE MACHINE'S SOLID AND HEAVY FEEL?
YES it had a feel of quality.
NO it leaves dents in my carpet.

DID YOU ACCIDENTALLY RUSH TO THE SHOPS ON SEPTEMBER 23?
YES I felt rather foolish.
NO but I still felt strangely empty on that day.

HAVE YOU BEEN TEMPTED TO START SUPPORTING ARSENAL?
YES The shirts appeal to me on a subconscious level.
NO nothing could lower me that far.

HAVE YOU TRIED VISITED ANY 'ADULT' WEBSITES USING DREAMCAST'S NET ACCESS?
NO no.
YES er, I mean no.

DO YOU LIKE THE DREAMCAST ADVERTS?
NO they don't show the games!
YES the artistic juxtaposition of everyday life and stereotypical gaming imagery makes for an arresting and captivating televisual experience, Melvin.

DO YOU SEE DREAMCAST SPIRAL SHAPES EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK?
YES the clouds, the sea, the flushing toilet, my coffee…, everywhere. Make them stop. MAKE THEM STOP!
NO although the analogue stick does look a bit like my willy.

DO YOU HAVE A 60HZ-COMPATIBLE TELEVISION?
YES the superior frame rate improve the gaming experience.
NO I have a television but it never hurts me. I don't understand.

DID YOU REMEMBER TO BUY A VM UNIT?
YES fills up quick, doesn't it?
NO eight-bloody-hours of Sonic Adventure gone. All gone.

HAVE YOU GOT USED TO THE NAME 'DREAMCAST' YET?
YES it emphasises the futuristic and dream-like nature of the gaming experience.
NO I have Tipp-ex-ed the name out and felt-tipped in 'Turbo Killah' to make it more acceptable to my macho friends.

DOES IT MATTER THAT A FRENCHMAN IS IN CHARGE OF SEGA EUROPE?
NO our European friends are every bit as talented as we are, perhaps even more so when it comes to making key business decisions.
YES the French all (*Censored in the interests of continuing good relations with Sega Europe - Ed*) and then lick off the residue.

IS THE EMPTINESS OF YOUR LIFE MADE WORSE BY DC'S MULTIPLAYER BOASTS?
YES Sonic is the only reason I carry on. I talk to him and he understands my pain.
NO my large group of friends enjoy playing Dreamcast with me.

△ **What do you mean you haven't got yours yet?**

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HIDDEN COMPO: Tell us the number of games available on launch day. Mark entries 'Hidden Compo' and mail them to the usual address by Thursday 21 October. Mark Garford wins a VM unit for last month's compo where he included the actual and original launch dates.

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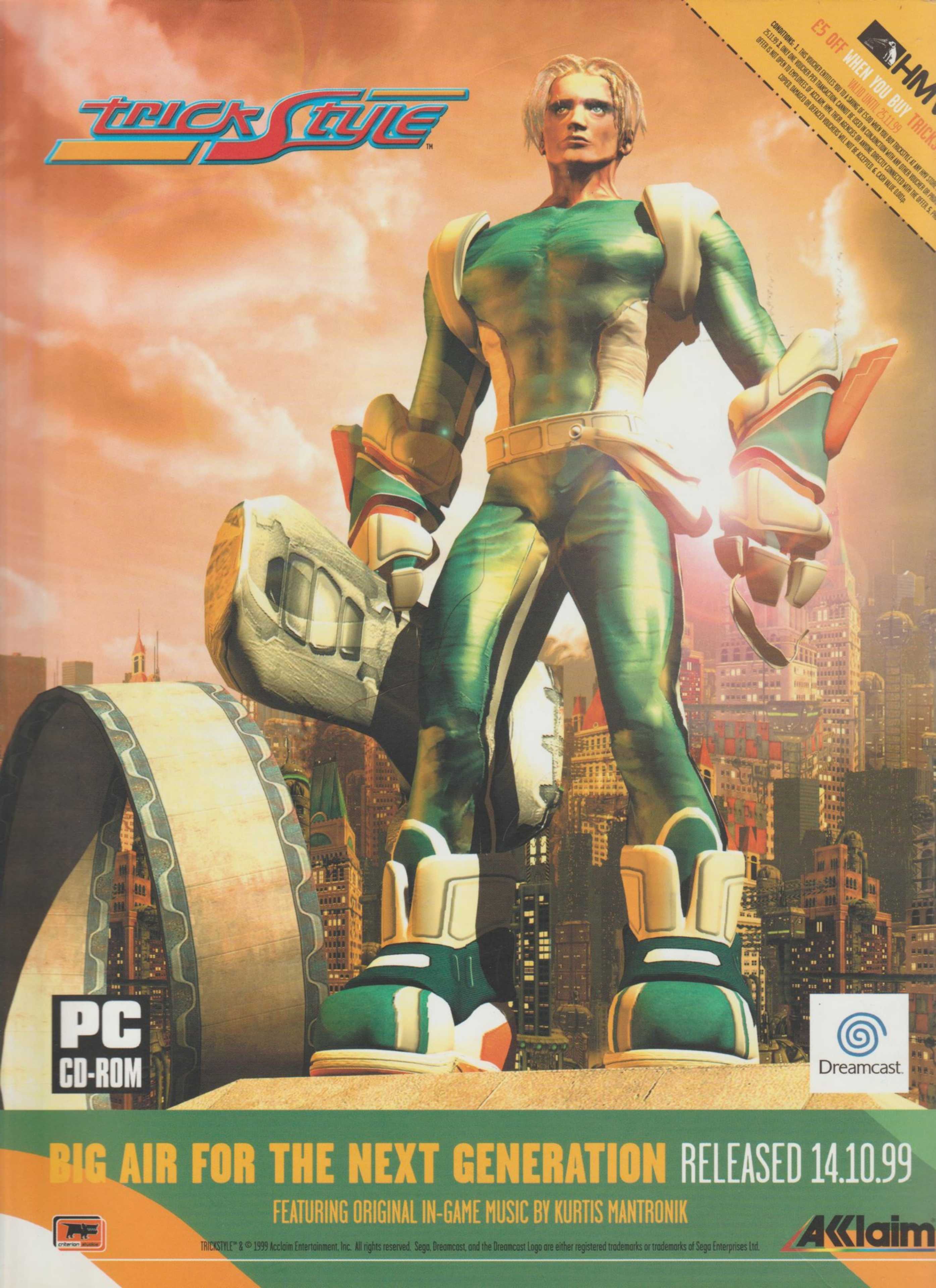
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